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Sixth Volume.

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# LITTLE CLASSICS.

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ROSSITER JOHNSON.

## LOVE.

LOVE AND SKATES.—THE MAID OF MALINES.—THE STORY OF RUTH.  
THE RISE OF ISKANDER.

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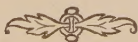
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## LOVE AND SKATES.

BY THEODORE WINTHROP.

### I.

A KNOT AND A MAN TO CUT IT.

**C**ONSTERNATION! Consternation in the back office of Benjamin Brummage, Esq., banker in Wall Street.

Yesterday down came Mr. Superintendent Whiffler, from Dunderbunk, up the North River, to say, that “unless something be done, *at once*, the Dunderbunk Foundry and Iron-Works must wind up.” President Brummage forthwith convoked his Directors. And here they sat around the green table, forlorn as the guests at a Barmecide feast.

Well they might be forlorn! It was the rosy summer solstice, the longest and fairest day of all the year. But rose-color and sunshine had fled from Wall Street. Noisy Crisis towing black Panic, as a puffing steam-tug drags a three-decker cocked and primed for destruction, had suddenly sailed in upon Credit.

As all the green inch-worms vanish on the 10th of every June, so on the 10th of that June all the money

in America had buried itself and was as if it were not. Everybody and everything was ready to fail. If the hindmost brick went, down would go the whole file.

There were ten Directors of the Dunderbunk Foundry.

Now, not seldom, of a Board of ten Directors, five are wise and five are foolish: five wise, who bag all the Company's funds in salaries and commissions for indorsing its paper; five foolish, who get no salaries, no commissions, no dividends, — nothing, indeed, but abuse from the stockholders, and the reputation of thieves. That is to say, five of the ten are pickpockets; the other five, pockets to be picked.

It happened that the Dunderbunk Directors were all honest and foolish but one. He, John Churm, honest and wise, was off at the West, with his Herculean shoulders at the wheels of a dead-locked railroad. These honest fellows did not wish Dunderbunk to fail for several reasons. First, it was not pleasant to lose their investment. Second, one important failure might betray Credit to Crisis with Panic at its heels, whereupon every investment would be in danger. Third, what would become of their Directorial reputations? From President Brummage down, each of these gentlemen was one of the pockets to be picked in a great many companies. Each was of the first Wall Street fashion, invited to lend his name and take stock in every new enterprise. Any one of them might have walked down town in a long patchwork toga made of the newspaper advertisements of boards in which his name proudly figured. If Dunderbunk failed, the toga was torn, and might presently go to rags beyond repair. The first rent would inaugurate

universal rupture. How to avoid this disaster? — that was the question.

“State the case, Mr. Superintendent Whiffler,” said President Brummage, in his pompous manner, with its pomp a little collapsed, *pro tempore*.

Inefficient Whiffler whimpered out his story.

The confessions of an impotent executive are sorry stuff to read. Whiffler’s long, dismal complaint shall not be repeated. He had taken a prosperous concern, had carried on things in his own way, and now failure was inevitable. He had bought raw material lavishly, and worked it badly into half-ripe material, which nobody wanted to buy. He was in arrears to his hands. He had tried to bully them, when they asked for their money. They had insulted him, and threatened to knock off work, unless they were paid at once. “A set of horrid ruffians,” Whiffler said; “and his life would n’t be safe many days among them.”

“Withdraw, if you please, Mr. Superintendent,” President Brummage requested. “The Board will discuss measures of relief.”

The more they discussed, the more consternation. Nobody said anything to the purpose, except Mr. Sam Gwelp, his late father’s lubberly son and successor.

“Blast!” said he; “we shall have to let it slide!”

Into this assembly of imbeciles unexpectedly entered Mr. John Churm. He had set his Western railroad trains rolling, and was just returned to town. Now he was ready to put those Herculean shoulders at any other bemired and rickety no-go-cart.

Mr. Churm was not accustomed to be a Director in

feeble companies. He came into Dunderbunk recently as executor of his friend Damer, a year ago bored to death by a silly wife.

Churm's bristly aspect and incisive manner made him a sharp contrast to Brummage. The latter personage was flabby in flesh, and the oppressively civil counter-jumper style of his youth had grown naturally into a deportment of most imposing pomposity.

The Tenth Director listened to the President's recitative of their difficulties, chorused by the Board.

"Gentlemen," said Director Churm, "you want two things. The first is Money!"

He pronounced this cabalistic word with such magic power, that all the air seemed instantly filled with a cheerful flight of gold American eagles, each carrying a double eagle on its back and a silver dollar in its claws; and all the soil of America seemed to sprout with coin, as after a shower a meadow sprouts with the yellow buds of the dandelion.

"Money! yes, Money!" murmured the Directors.

It seemed a word of good omen, now.

"The second thing," resumed the new-comer, "is a Man!"

The Directors looked at each other and did not see such a being.

"The actual Superintendent of Dunderbunk is a dunderhead," said Churm.

"Pun!" cried Sam Gwelp, waking up from a snooze.

Several of the Directors, thus instructed, started a complimentary laugh.

"Order, gentlemen! Orrderr!" said the President.

"We must have a Man, not a Whiffler!" Churm continued. "And I have one in my eye."

Everybody examined his eye.

"Would you be so good as to name him?" said Old Brummage, timidly.

He wanted to see a Man, but feared the strange creature might be dangerous.

"Richard Wade," says Churm.

They did not know him. The name sounded forcible.

"He has been in California," the nominator said.

A shudder ran around the green table. They seemed to see a frowzy desperado, shaggy as a bison, in a red shirt and jack-boots, hung about the waist with an assortment of six-shooters and bowie-knives, and standing against a background of mustangs, mountebanks, and lynch-law.

"We must get Wade," Churm says, with authority. "He knows Iron by heart. He can handle Men. I will back him with my blank check, to any amount, to his order."

Here a murmur of applause, swelling to a cheer, burst from the Directors.

Everybody knew that the Geological Bank deemed Churm's deposits the fundamental stratum of its wealth. They lay there in the vaults, like underlying granite. When hot times came, they boiled up in a mountain to buttress the world.

Churm's blank check seemed to wave in the air like an oriflamme of victory. Its payee might come from Botany Bay; he might wear his beard to his knees, and his belt stuck full of howitzers and boomerangs; he might have



been repeatedly hung by Vigilance Committees, and as often cut down and revived by galvanism; but brandishing that check, good for anything less than a million, every Director in Wall Street was his slave, his friend, and his brother.

"Let us vote Mr. Wade in by acclamation," cried the Directors.

"But, gentlemen," Churm interposed, "if I give him my blank check, he must have *carte blanche*, and no one to interfere in his management."

Every Director, from President Brummage down, drew a long face at this condition.

It was one of their great privileges to potter in the Dunderbunk affairs and propose ludicrous impossibilities.

"Just as you please," Churm continued. "I name a competent man, a gentleman and fine fellow. I back him with all the cash he wants. But he must have his own way. Now take him, or leave him!"

Such despotic talk had never been heard before in that Directors' Room. They relucted a moment. But they thought of their togas of advertisements in danger. The blank check shook its blandishments before their eyes.

"We take him," they said.

"He shall be at Dunderbunk to take hold to-morrow morning," said Churm, and went off to notify him.

Upon this, Consternation sailed out of the hearts of Brummage and associates.

They lunched with good appetites over the green table, and the President confidently remarked, —

"I don't believe there is going to be much of a crisis, after all."

## II.

## BARRACKS FOR THE HERO.

WADE packed his kit, and took the Hudson River train for Dunderbunk the same afternoon.

He swallowed his dust, he gasped for his fresh air, he wept over his cinders, he refused his "lozengers," he was admired by all the pretty girls and detested by all the puny men in the train, and in good time got down at his station.

He stopped on the platform to survey the land and water privileges of his new abode.

"The June sunshine is unequalled," he soliloquized, "the river is splendid, the hills are pretty, and the Highlands, north, respectable; but the village has gone to seed. Place and people look lazy, vicious, and ashamed. I suppose those chimneys are my Foundry. The smoke rises as if the furnaces were ill-fed and weak in the lungs. Nothing, I can see, looks alive, except that queer little steamboat coming in, — the 'I. Ambuster,' — jolly name for a boat!"

Wade left his traps at the station, and walked through the village. All the gilding of a golden sunset of June could not make it anything but commonplace. It would be forlorn on a gray day, and utterly dismal in a storm.

"I must look up a civilized house to lodge in," thought the stranger. "I cannot possibly camp at the tavern. Its offence is rum, and smells to heaven."

Presently our explorer found a neat, white, two-story, home-like abode on the upper street, overlooking the river.

"This promises," he thought. "Here are roses on the porch, a piano, or at least a melodeon, by the parlor-window, and they are insured in the Mutual, as the Mutual's plate announces. Now, if that nice-looking person in black I see setting a table in the back room is a widow, I will camp here."

Perry Purtett was the name on the door, and opposite the sign of an *omnium-gatherum* country-store hinted that Perry was deceased. The hint was a broad one. Wade read, "Ringdove, Successor to late P. Purtett."

"It's worth a try to get in here out of the pagan barbarism around. I'll propose — as a lodger — to the widow."

So said Wade, and rang the bell under the roses. A pretty, slim, delicate, fair-haired maiden answered.

"This explains the roses and the melodeon," thought Wade, and asked, "Can I see your mother?"

Mamma came. "Mild, timid, accustomed to depend on the late Perry, and wants a friend," Wade analyzed, while he bowed. He proposed himself as a lodger.

"I did n't know it was talked of generally," replied the widow, plaintively; "but I *have* said that we felt lonesome, Mr. Purtett bein' gone, and if the new minister —"

Here she paused. The cut of Wade's jib was unclerical. He did not stoop, like a new minister. He was not pallid, meagre, and clad in unwholesome black, like the same. His bronzed face was frank and bold and unfamiliar with speculations on Original Sin or Total Depravity.

"I am not the new minister," said Wade, smiling

slightly over his mustache; "but a new Superintendent for the Foundry."

"Mr. Whiffler is goin'?" exclaimed Mrs. Purtett.

She looked at her daughter, who gave a little sob and ran out of the room.

"What makes my daughter Belle feel bad," says the widow, "is, that she had a friend, — well, it is n't too much to say that they was as good as engaged, — and he was foreman of the Foundry finishin'-shop. But somehow Whiffler spoilt him, just as he spoils everything he touches; and last winter, when Belle was away, William Tarbox — that's his name, and his head is runnin' over with inventions — took to spreein' and liquor, and got ashamed of himself, and let down from a foreman to a hand, and is all the while lettin' down lower."

The widow's heart thus opened, Wade walked in as consoler. This also opened the lodgings to him. He was presently installed in the large and small front rooms up stairs, unpacking his traps, and making himself permanently at home.

Superintendent Whiffler came over, by and by, to see his successor. He did not like his looks. The new man should have looked mean or weak or rascally, to suit the outgoer.

"How long do you expect to stay?" asks Whiffler, with a half-sneer, watching Wade hanging a map and a print *vis-à-vis*.

"Until the men and I, or the Company and I, cannot pull together."

"I'll give you a week to quarrel with both, and an-

other to see the whole concern go to everlasting smash. And now, if you're ready, I'll go over the accounts with you and prove it."

Whiffler himself, insolent, cowardly, and a humbug, if not a swindler, was enough, Wade thought, to account for any failure. But he did not mention this conviction.

### III.

#### HOW TO BEHEAD A HYDRA!

AT ten next morning Whiffler handed over the safe-key to Wade, and departed to ruin some other property, if he could get one to ruin. Wade walked with him to the gate.

"I'm glad to be out of a sinking ship," said the ex-boss. "The Works will go down, sure as shooting. And I think myself well out of the clutches of these men. They're a bullying, swearing, drinking set of infernal ruffians. Foremen are just as bad as hands. I never felt safe of my life with 'em."

"A bad lot, are they?" mused Wade, as he returned to the office. "I must give them a little sharp talk by way of Inaugural."

He had the bell tapped and the men called together in the main building.

Much work was still going on in an inefficient, unsystematic way.

While hot fires were roaring in the great furnaces, smoke rose from the dusty beds where Titanic castings were cooling. Great cranes, manacled with heavy chains,

stood over the furnace-doors, ready to lift steaming jorums of melted metal, and pour out, hot and hot, for the moulds to swallow.

Raw material in big heaps lay about, waiting for the fire to ripen it. Here was a stack of long, rough, rusty pigs, clumsy as the shillelahs of the Anakim. There was a pile of short, thick masses, lying higgledy-piggledy, — stuff from the neighboring mines, which needed to be crossed with foreign stock before it could be of much use in civilization.

Here, too, was raw material organized: a fly-wheel, large enough to keep the knobbiest of asteroids revolving without a wobble; a cross-head, cross-tail, and piston-rod, to help a great sea-going steamer breast the waves; a light walking-beam, to whirl the paddles of a fast boat on the river; and other members of machines, only asking to be put together and vivified by steam and they would go at their work with a will.

From the black rafters overhead hung the heavy folds of a dim atmosphere, half dust, half smoke. A dozen sunbeams, forcing their way through the grimy panes of the grimy upper windows, found this compound quite palpable and solid, and they moulded out of it a series of golden bars set side by side aloft, like the pipes of an organ out of its perpendicular.

Wade grew indignant, as he looked about him and saw so much good stuff and good force wasting for want of a little will and skill to train the force and manage the stuff. He abhorred bankruptcy and chaos.

“All they want here is a head,” he thought.

He shook his own. The brain within was well de-

veloped with healthy exercise. It filled its case, and did not rattle like a withered kernel, or sound soft like a rotten one. It was a vigorous, muscular brain. The owner felt that he could trust it for an effort, as he could his lungs for a shout, his legs for a leap, or his fist for a knock-down argument.

At the tap of the bell, the "bad lot" of men came together. They numbered more than two hundred, though the Foundry was working short. They had been notified that "that gonoph of a Whiffler was kicked out, and a new feller was in, who looked cranky enough, and wanted to see 'em and tell 'em whether he was a damn' fool or not."

So all hands collected from the different parts of the Foundry to see the head.

They came up with easy and somewhat swaggering bearing, — a good many roughs, with here and there a ruffian. Several, as they approached, swung and tossed, for mere overplus of strength, the sledges with which they had been tapping at the bald shiny pates of their anvils. Several wielded their long pokers like lances.

Grimy chaps, all with their faces streaked, like Blackfeet in their war-paint. Their hairy chests showed, where some men parade elaborate shirt-bosoms. Some had their sleeves pushed up to the elbow to exhibit their compact flexors and extensors. Some had rolled their flannel up to the shoulder, above the bulging muscles of the upper arm. They wore aprons tied about the neck, like the bibs of our childhood; or about the waist, like the coquettish articles which young housewives affect. But there was no coquetry in these great



flaps of leather or canvas, and they were besmeared and rust-stained quite beyond any bib that ever suffered under bread-and-molasses or mud-pie treatment.

They lounged and swaggered up, and stood at ease, not without rough grace, in a sinuous line, coiled and knotted like a snake.

Ten feet back stood the new Hercules who was to take down that Hydra's two hundred crests of insubordination.

They inspected him, and he them as coolly. He read and ticketed each man, as he came up, — good, bad, or on the fence, — and marked each so that he would know him among a myriad.

The Hands faced the Head. It was a question whether the two hundred or the one would be master in Dunderbunk.

Which was boss? An old question. It has to be settled whenever a new man claims power, and there is always a struggle until it is fought out by main force of brain or muscle.

Wade had made up his mind on this subject. He waited a moment until the men were still. He was a Saxon six-footer of thirty. He stood easily on his pins, as if he had eyed men and facts before. His mouth looked firm, his brow freighted, his nose clipper; that the hands could see. But clipper noses are not always backed by a stout hull. Seemingly freighted brows sometimes carry nothing but ballast and dunnage. The firmness may be all in the mustache, while the mouth hides beneath, a mere silly slit. All which the hands knew.

Wade began, short and sharp as a trip-hammer when it has a bar to shape.

“I’m the new Superintendent. Richard Wade is my name. I rang the bell because I wanted to see you and have you see me. You know as well as I do that these Works are in a bad way. They can’t stay so. They must come up and pay you regular wages and the Company profits. Every man of you has got to be here on the spot when the bell strikes, and up to the mark in his work. You haven’t been, — and you know it. You’ve turned out rotten iron, — stuff that any honest shop would be ashamed of. Now there’s to be a new leaf turned over here. You’re to be paid on the nail; but you’ve got to earn your money. I won’t have any idlers or shirkers or rebels about me. I shall work hard myself, and every man of you will, or he leaves the shop. Now, if anybody has a complaint to make, I’ll hear him before you all.”

The men were evidently impressed with Wade’s Inaugural. It meant something. But they were not to be put down so easily, after long misrule. There began to be a whisper, —

“B’il in, Bill Tarbox! and talk up to him!”

Presently Bill shouldered forward and faced the new ruler.

Since Bill took to drink and degradation, he had been the butt-end of riot and revolt at the Foundry. He had had his own way with Whiffler. He did not like to abdicate and give in to this new chap without testing him.

In a better mood, Bill would have liked Wade’s looks and words; but to-day he had a sore head, a sour face,

and a bitter heart, from last night's spree. And then he had heard — it was as well known already in Dunderbunk as if the town-crier had cried it — that Wade was lodging at Mrs. Purtett's, where poor Bill was excluded. So Bill stepped forward as spokesman of the ruffianly element, and the immoral force gathered behind and backed him heavily.

Tarbox, too, was a Saxon six-footer of thirty. But he had sagged one inch for want of self-respect. He had spoilt his color and dyed his mustache. He wore foxy-black pantaloons tucked into red-topped boots, with the name of the maker on a gilt shield. His red flannel shirt was open at the neck, and caught with a black handkerchief. His damaged tile was in permanent crape for the late lamented Poole.

"We allow," says Bill, in a tone half-way between Lablache's *De profundis* and a burglar's bull-dog's snarl, "that we've did our work as good as need to be did. We 'xpect we know our rights. We ha'n't ben treated fair, and I'm damned if we're go'n' to stan' it."

"Stop!" says Wade. "No swearing in this shop!"

"Who the Devil is go'n' to stop it?" growled Tarbox.

"I am. Do you step back now, and let some one come out who can talk like a gentleman!"

"I'm damned if I stir till I've had my say out," says Bill, shaking himself up and looking dangerous.

"Go back!"

Wade moved close to him, also looking dangerous.

"Don't tech me!" Bill threatened, squaring off.

He was not quick enough. Wade knocked him down

flat on a heap of moulding-sand. The hat in mourning for Poole found its place in a puddle.

Bill did not like the new Emperor's method of compelling *kotou*. Round One of the mill had not given him enough.

He jumped up from his soft bed and made a vicious rush at Wade. But he was damaged by evil courses. He was fighting against law and order, on the side of wrong and bad manners.

The same fist met him again, and heavier.

Up went his heels! Down went his head! It struck the ragged edge of a fresh casting, and there he lay stunned and bleeding on his hard black pillow.

"Ring the bell to go to work!" said Wade, in a tone that made the ringer jump. "Now, men, take hold and do your duty, and everything will go smooth!"

The bell clanged in. The line looked at its prostrate champion, then at the new boss standing there, cool and brave, and not afraid of a regiment of sledge-hammers.

They wanted an Executive. They wanted to be well governed, as all men do. They wanted disorder out and order in. The new man looked like a man, talked fair, hit hard. Why not all hands give in with a good grace and go to work like honest fellows?

The line broke up. The hands went off to their duty. And there was never any more insubordination at Dunderbunk.

This was June.

Skates in the next chapter.

Love in good time afterward shall glide upon the scene.

## IV.

## A CHRISTMAS GIFT.

THE pioneer sunbeam of next Christmas morning rattled over the Dunderbunk hills, flashed into Richard Wade's eyes, waked him, and was off, ricochetting across the black ice of the river.

Wade jumped up, electrified and jubilant. He had gone to bed feeling quite too despondent for so healthy a fellow. Christmas Eve, the time of family meetings, reminded him how lonely he was. He had not a relative in the world, except two little nieces, — one as tall as his knee, the other almost up to his waist; and them he had safely bestowed in a nook of New England, to gain wit and virtues as they gained inches.

"I have had a stern and lonely life," thought Wade, as he blew out his candle last night, "and what has it profited me?"

Perhaps the pioneer sunbeam answered this question with a truism, not always as applicable as in this case, — "A brave, able, self-respecting manhood is fair profit for any man's first thirty years of life."

But, answered or not, the question troubled Wade no more. He shot out of bed in tiptop spirits; shouted "Merry Christmas!" at the rising disk of the sun; looked over the black ice; thrilled with the thought of a long holiday for skating; and proceeded to dress in a knowing suit of rough clothes, singing, "*Ah, non giunge!*" as he slid into them.

Presently, glancing from his south window, he ob-

served several matinal smokes rising from the chimneys of a country-house a mile away, on a slope fronting the river.

"Peter Skerrett must be back from Europe at last," he thought. "I hope he is as fine a fellow as he was ten years ago. I hope marriage has not made him a muff, and wealth a weakling."

Wade went down to breakfast with an heroic appetite. His "Merry Christmas" to Mrs. Purtett was followed up by a ravished kiss and the gift of a silver butter-knife. The good widow did not know which to be most charmed with. The butter-knife was genuine, shining, solid silver, with her initials, M. B. P., Martha Bilsby Purtett, given in luxuriant flourishes; but then the kiss had such a fine twang, such an exhilarating titillation! The late Perry's kisses, from first to last, had wanted point. They were, as the Spanish proverb would put it, unsavory as unsalted eggs, for want of a mustache. The widow now perceived, with mild regret, how much she had missed when she married "a man all shaven and shorn." Her cheek, still fair, though forty, flushed with novel delight, and she appreciated her lodger more than ever.

Wade's salutation to Belle Purtett was more distant. There must be a little friendly reserve between a handsome young man and a pretty young woman several grades lower in the social scale, living in the same house. They were on the most cordial terms, however; and her gift, — of course embroidered slippers, — and his to her, — of course "The Illustrated Poets," in Turkey morocco, — were exchanged with tender good-will.

"We shall meet on the ice, Miss Belle," said Wade. "It is a day of a thousand for skating."

"Mr. Ringdove says you are a famous skater," Belle rejoined. "He saw you on the river yesterday evening."

"Yes; Tarbox and I were practising to exhibit to-day; but I could not do much with my dull old skates."

Wade breakfasted deliberately, as a holiday morning allowed, and then walked down to the Foundry. There would be no work done to-day, except by a small gang keeping up the fires. The Superintendent wished only to give his First Semiannual Report an hour's polishing, before he joined all Dunderbunk on the ice.

It was a halcyon day, worthy of its motto, "Peace on earth, good-will to men." The air was electric, the sun overflowing with jolly shine, the river smooth and sheeny from the hither bank to the snowy mountains opposite.

"I wish I were Rembrandt, to paint this grand shadowy interior," thought Wade, as he entered the silent, deserted Foundry. "With the gleam of the snow in my eyes, it looks deliciously warm and *chiaroscuro*. When the men are here and *fervet opus*, — the pot boils, — I cannot stop to see the picturesque."

He opened his office, took his Report and began to complete it with ,s, ;s, and .s in the right places.

All at once the bell of the Works rang out loud and clear. Presently the Superintendent became aware of a tramp and a bustle in the building. By and by came a tap at the office-door.

"Come in," said Wade; and, enter young Perry Purtett.



Perry was a boy of fifteen, with hair the color of fresh sawdust, white eyebrows, and an uncommonly wide-awake look. Ringdove, his father's successor, could never teach Perry the smirk, the grace, and the seductiveness of the counter, so the boy had found his place in the finishing-shop of the Foundry.

"Some of the hands would like to see you for half a jiff, Mr. Wade," said he. "Will you come along, if you please?"

There was a good deal of easy swagger about Perry, as there is always in boys and men whose business is to watch the lunging of steam-engines. Wade followed him. Perry led the way with a jaunty air that said, —

"Room here! Out of the way, you lubberly bits of cast-iron! Be careful, now, you big derricks, or I'll walk right over you! Room now for Me and My suite!"

This pompous usher conducted the Superintendent to the very spot in the main room of the Works where, six months before, the Inaugural had been pronounced and the first Veto spoken and enacted.

And there, as six months before, stood the Hands awaiting their Head. But the aprons, the red shirts, and the grime of working-days were off, and the whole were in holiday rig, — as black and smooth and shiny from top to toe as the members of a Congress of Undertakers.

Wade, following in the wake of Perry, took his stand facing the rank, and waited to see what he was summoned for. He had not long to wait.

To the front stepped Mr. William Tarbox, foreman of

the finishing-shop, no longer a bhoy, but an erect, fine-looking fellow, with no nitrate in his mustache, and his hat permanently out of mourning for the late Mr. Poole.

"Gentlemen," said Bill, "I move that this meeting organize by appointing Mr. Smith Wheelwright Chairman. As many as are in favor of this motion, please to say, 'Ay.'"

"Ay!" said the crowd, very loud and big. And then every man looked at his neighbor, a little abashed, as if he himself had made all the noise.

"This is a free country," continues Bill. "Every woter has a right to a fair shake. Contrary minds, 'No.'"

No contrary minds. The crowd uttered a great silence. Every man looked at his neighbor, surprised to find how well they agreed.

"Unanimous!" Tarbox pronounced. "No fractious minorities *here*, to block the wheels of legislation!"

The crowd burst into a roar at this significant remark, and, again abashed, dropped portcullis on its laughter, cutting off the flanks and tail of the sound.

"Mr. Purtett, will you please conduct the Chairman to the Chair," says Bill, very stately.

"Make way here!" cried Perry, with the manner of a man seven feet high. "Step out now, Mr. Chairman!"

He took a big, grizzled, docile-looking fellow patronizingly by the arm, led him forward, and chaired him on a large cylinder-head, in the rough, just hatched out of its mould.

"Bang away with that, and sing out 'Silence!'"

says the knowing boy, handing Wheelwright an iron bolt, and taking his place beside him, as prompter.

The docile Chairman obeyed. At his breaking silence by hooting "Silence!" the audience had another mighty bobtailed laugh.

"Say, 'Will some honorable member state the object of this meeting?'" whispered the prompter.

"Will some honorable mumbler state the subject of this 'ere meetin'?" says Chair, a little bashful and confused.

Bill Tarbox advanced, and, with a formal bow, began, —

"Mr. Chairman —"

"Say, 'Mr. Tarbox has the floor,'" piped Perry.

"Mr. Tarbox has the floor," diapasoned the Chair.

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen —" Bill began, and stopped.

"Say, 'Proceed, Sir!'" suggested Perry, which the senior did, magnifying the boy's whisper a dozen times.

Again Bill began and stopped.

"Boys," said he, dropping grandiloquence, "when I accepted the office of Orator of the Day at our primary, and promised to bring forward our Resolutions in honor of Mr. Wade with my best speech, I did n't think I was going to have such a head of steam on that the valves would get stuck and the piston jammed and I could n't say a word.

"But," he continued, warming up, "when I think of the Indian powwow we had in this very spot six months ago, — and what a mean bloat I was, going to the stub-tail dogs, with my hat over my eyes, — and

what a hard lot we were all round, livin' on nothing but argee whiskey, and rampin' off on benders, instead of makin' good iron, — and how the Works was flat broke, — and how Dunderbunk was full of women crying over their husbands and mothers ashamed of their sons, — boys, when I think how things was, and see how they are, and look at Mr. Wade standing there like a — ”

Bill hesitated for a comparison.

“ Like a thousand of brick,” Perry Purtett suggested, *sotto voce*.

The Chairman took this as a hint to himself.

“ Like a thousand of brick,” he said, with the voice of a Stentor.

Here the audience roared and cheered, and the Orator got a fresh start.

“ When you came, Mr. Wade,” he resumed, “ we was about sick of putty-heads and sneaks that did n't know enough or did n't dare to make us stand round and bone in. You walked in, b'ilin' over with grit. You took hold as if you belonged here. You made things jump like a two-headed tarrier. All we wanted was a live man, to say, ‘ Here, boys, all together now! You've got your stint, and I've got mine. I'm boss in this shop, — but I can't do the first thing, unless every man pulls his pound. Now, then, my hand is on the throttle, grease the wheels, oil the walves, poke the fires, hook on, and let's yank her through with a will!’ ”

At this figure the meeting showed a tendency to cheer. “ Silence!” Perry sternly suggested. “ Silence!” repeated the Chair.

“ Then,” continued the Orator, “ you was n't one of

the uneasy kind, always fussin' and cussin' round. You was n't always spyin' to see we didn't take home a cross-tail or a hundred-weight of cast-iron in our pants' pockets, or go to swiggin' hot metal out of the ladles on the sly."

Here an enormous laugh requited Bill's joke. Perry prompted, the Chair banged with his bolt and cried, "Order!"

"Well, now, boys," Tarbox went on, "what has come of having one of the right sort to be boss? Why, this. The Works go ahead, stiddy as the North River. We work full time and full-handed. We turn out stuff that no shop needs to be ashamed of. Wages is on the nail. We have a good time generally. How is that, boys, — Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen?"

"That's so!" from everybody.

"And there's something better yet," Bill resumed. "Dunderbunk used to be full of crying women. They've stopped crying now."

Here the whole assemblage, Chairman and all, burst into an irrepressible cheer.

"But I'm making my speech as long as a lightning-rod," said the speaker. "I'll put on the brakes, short. I guess Mr. Wade understands pretty well, now, how we feel; and if he don't, here it all is in shape, in this document, with 'Whereas' at the top and 'Resolved' entered along down in five places. Mr. Purtett, will you hand the Resolutions to the Superintendent?"

Perry advanced and did his office loftily, much to the amusement of Wade and the workmen.

"Now," Bill resumed, "we wanted, besides, to make

you a little gift, Mr. Wade, to remember the day by. So we got up a subscription, and every man put in his dime. Here's the present, — hand 'em over, Perry!

“There, Sir, is THE BEST PAIR OF SKATES to be had in York City, made for work, and no nonsense about 'em. We Dunderbunk boys give 'em to you, one for all, and hope you'll like 'em and beat the world skating, as you do in all the things we've knowed you try.”

“Now, boys,” Bill perorated, “before I retire to the shades of private life, I motion we give Three Cheers — regular Toplifters — for Richard Wade!”

“Hurrah! Wade and Good Government!” “Hurrah! Wade and Prosperity!” “Hurrah! Wade and the Women's Tears Dry!”

Cheers like the shout of Achilles! Wielding sledges is good for the bellows, it appears. Toplifters! Why, the smoky black rafters overhead had to tug hard to hold the roof on. Hurrah! From every corner of the vast building came back rattling echoes. The Works, the machinery, the furnaces, the stuff, all had their voice to add to the verdict.

Magnificent music! and our Anglo-Saxon is the only race in the world civilized enough to join in singing it. We are the only hurrahing people, — the only brood hatched in a “Hurrah's nest.”

Silence restored, the Chairman, prompted by Perry, said, “Mr. Wade has the floor for a few remarks.”

Of course Wade had to speak, and did. He would not have been an American in America else. But his heart was too full to say more than a few hearty and earnest words of good feeling.

"Now, men," he closed, "I want to get away on the river and see if my skates will go as they look; so I'll end by proposing three cheers for Smith Wheelwright, our Chairman, three for our Orator, Tarbox, three for Old Dunderbunk, — Works, Men, Women, and Children; and one big cheer for Old Father Iron, as rousing a cheer as ever was roared."

So they gave their three times three with enormous enthusiasm. The roof shook, the furnaces rattled, Perry Purtett banged with the Chairman's hammer, the great echoes thundered through the Foundry.

And when they ended with one gigantic cheer for IRON, tough and true, the weapon, the tool, and the engine of all civilization, it seemed as if the uproar would never cease until Father Iron himself heard the call in his smithy away under the magnetic pole, and came clanking up to return thanks in person.

## V.

### SKATING AS A FINE ART.

Of all the plays that are played by this playful world on its play-days, there is no play like Skating.

To prepare a board for the moves of this game of games, a panel for the drawings of this Fine Art, a stage for the *entrechats* and *pirouettes* of its graceful adepts, Zero, magical artificer, had been for the last two nights sliding at full speed up and down the North River.

We have heard of Midas, whose touch made gold, and of the virgin under whose feet sprang roses; but Zero's

heels and toes were armed with more precious influences. They left a diamond way where they slid; a hundred and fifty miles of diamond, half a mile wide and six inches thick.

Diamond can only reflect sunlight; ice can contain it. Zero's product, finer even than diamond, was filled — at the rate of a million to the square foot — with bubbles immeasurably little, and yet every one big enough to comprise the entire sun in small, but without alteration or abridgment. When the sun rose, each of these wonderful cells was ready to catch the tip of a sunbeam and house it in a shining abode.

Besides this, Zero had inlaid its work all along shore with exquisite marquetry of leaves, brown and evergreen, of sprays and twigs, reeds and grasses. No parquet in any palace from Fontainebleau to St. Petersburg could show such delicate patterns, or could gleam so brightly, though polished with all the wax in Christendom.

On this fine pavement, all the way from Cohoes to Spuyten Duyvil, Jubilee was sliding without friction, the Christmas morning of these adventures.

Navigation was closed. Navigators had leisure. The sloops and schooners were frozen in along shore, the tugs and barges were laid up in basins, the floating palaces were down at New York deodorizing their bar-rooms, regilding their bridal-chambers, and enlarging their spittoon accommodations, aloof and aloft, for next summer. All the population was out on the ice, skating, sliding, sledding, slipping, tumbling, to its heart's content.

One person out of every Dunderbunk family was of course at home roasting Christmas turkey. The rest



were already at high jinks on Zero's Christmas present, when Wade and the men came down from the meeting.

Wade buckled on his new skates in a jiffy. He stamped to settle himself, and then flung off half a dozen circles on the right leg, half a dozen with the left, and the same with either leg backwards.

The ice, traced with these white peripheries, showed like a blackboard where a school has been chalking diagrams of Euclid, to point at with the "slow, unyielding finger" of demonstration.

"Hurrah!" cries Wade, halting in front of the men, who, some on the Foundry wharf, some on the deck of our first acquaintance at Dunderbunk, the tug "I. Ambuster," were putting on their skates or watching him, — "hurrah! the skates are perfection! Are you ready, Bill?"

"Yes," says Tarbox, whizzing off rings as exact as Giotto's autograph.

"Now, then," Wade said, "we'll give Dunderbunk a laugh, as we practised last night."

They got under full headway, Wade backwards, Bill forwards, holding hands. When they were near enough to the merry throng out in the stream, both dropped into a sitting posture, with the left knee bent, and each with his right leg stretched out parallel to the ice and fitting compactly by the other man's leg. In this queer figure they rushed through the laughing crowd.

Then all Dunderbunk formed a ring, agog for a grand show of

#### SKATING AS A FINE ART.

The world loves to see Great Artists, and expects them to do their duty.

It is hard to treat of this Fine Art by the Art of Fine Writing. Its eloquent motions must be seen.

To skate Fine Art you must have a Body and a Soul, each of the First Order; otherwise you will never get out of coarse art and skating in one syllable. So much for yourself, the motive power. And your machinery, — your smooth-bottomed rockers, the same shape stem and stern, — this must be as perfect as the man it moves, and who moves it.

Now suppose you wish to skate so that the critics will say, "See! this athlete does his work as Church paints, as Darley draws, as Palmer chisels, as Whittier strikes the lyre, and Longfellow the dulcimer; he is as terse as Emerson, as clever as Holmes, as graceful as Curtis; he is as calm as Seward, as keen as Phillips, as stalwart as Beecher; he is Garibaldi, he is Kit Carson, he is Blondin; he is as complete as the steamboat Metropolis, as Steers's yacht, as Singer's sewing-machine, as Colt's revolver, as the steam-plough, as Civilization." You wish to be so ranked among the people and things that lead the age; consider the qualities you must have, and while you consider keep your eye on Richard Wade, for he has them all in perfection.

First, — of your physical qualities. You must have lungs, not bellows; and an active heart, not an assortment of sluggish auricles and ventricles. You must have legs, not shanks. Their shape is unimportant, except that they must not interfere at the knee. You must have muscles, not flabbiness; sinews like wire; nerves like sunbeams; and a thin layer of flesh to cushion the gable-ends, where you will strike, if you tumble, — which, once

for all be it said, you must never do. You must be all *momentum*, and no *inertia*. You must be one part grace, one force, one agility, and the rest caoutchouc, Manilla hemp, and watch-spring. Your machine, your body, must be thoroughly obedient. It must go just so far and no farther. You have got to be as unerring as a planet holding its own, emphatically, between forces centripetal and centrifugal. Your *aplomb* must be as absolute as the pounce of a falcon.

So much for a few of the physical qualities necessary to be a Great Artist in Skating. See Wade, how he shows them!

Now for the moral and intellectual. Pluck is the first; — it always is the first quality. Then enthusiasm. Then patience. Then pertinacity. Then a fine æsthetic faculty, — in short, good taste. Then an orderly and submissive mind, that can consent to act in accordance with the laws of Art. Circumstances, too, must have been reasonably favorable. That well-known sceptic, the King of tropical Bantam, could not skate, because he had never seen ice and doubted even the existence of solid water. Widdrington, after the Battle of Chevy Chase, could not have skated, because he had no legs, — poor fellow!

But, granted the ice and the legs, then if you begin in the elastic days of youth, when cold does not sting, tumblers do not bruise, and duckings do not wet; if you have pluck and ardor enough to try everything; if you work slowly ahead and stick to it; if you have good taste and a lively invention; if you are a man, and not a lubber; — then, in fine, you may become a Great

Skater, just as with equal power and equal pains you may put your grip on any kind of Greatness.

The technology of skating is imperfect. Few of the great feats, the Big Things, have admitted names. If I attempted to catalogue Wade's achievements, this chapter might become an unintelligible rhapsody. A sheet of paper and a pen-point cannot supply the place of a sheet of ice and a skate-edge. Geometry must have its diagrams, Anatomy its *corpus*, to carve. Skating also refuses to be spiritualized into a Science; it remains an Art, and cannot be expressed in a formula.

Skating has its Little Go, its Great Go, its Baccalaureate, its M. A., its F. S. D. (Doctor of Frantic Skipping), its A. G. D. (Doctor of Airy Gliding), its N. T. D. (Doctor of No Tumbles), and finally its highest degree, U. P. (Unapproachable Podographer).

Wade was U. P.

There were a hundred of Dunderbunkers who had passed their Little Go and could skate forward and backward easily. A half-hundred, perhaps, were through the Great Go; these could do outer edge freely. A dozen had taken the Baccalaureate, and were proudly repeating the pirouettes and spread-eagles of that degree. A few could cross their feet, on the edge, forward and backward, and shift edge on the same foot, and so were *Magistri Artis*.

Wade, U. P., added to these an indefinite list of combinations and fresh contrivances. He spun spirals slow, and spirals neck or nothing. He pivoted on one toe, with the other foot cutting rings, inner and outer edge, forward and back. He skated on one foot better than the

M. A.s could on both. He ran on his toes; he slid on his heels; he cut up shines like a sunbeam on a bender; he swung, light as if he could fly, if he pleased, like a wing-footed Mercury; he glided as if will, not muscle, moved him; he tore about in frenzies; his pivotal leg stood firm, his balance leg flapped like a graceful pinion; he turned somersets; he jumped, whirling backward as he went, over a platoon of boys laid flat on the ice,—the last boy winced, and thought he was amputated; but Wade flew over, and the boy still holds together as well as most boys. Besides this, he could write his name, with a flourish at the end, like the *rubrica* of a Spanish *hidalgo*. He could podograph any letter, and multitudes of ingenious curlicues which might pass for the alphabets of the unknown tongues. He could *not* tumble.

It was Fine Art.

Bill Tarbox sometimes pressed the champion hard. But Bill stopped just short of Fine Art, in High Artisan-ship.

How Dunderbunk cheered this wondrous display! How delighted the whole population was to believe they possessed the best skater on the North River! How they struggled to imitate! How they tumbled, some on their backs, some on their faces, some with dignity like the dying Cæsar, some rebelliously like a cat thrown out of a garret, some limp as an ancient acrobat! How they laughed at themselves and at each other!

"It's all in the new skates," says Wade, apologizing for his unapproachable power and finish.

"It's suthin' in the man," says Smith Wheelwright.

"Now chase me, everybody," said Wade.

And, for a quarter of an hour, he dodged the merry crowd, until at last, breathless, he let himself be touched by pretty Belle Purtett, rosiest of all the Dunderbunk bevy of rosy maidens on the ice.

"He rayther beats Bosting," says Captain Isaac Ambuster to Smith Wheelwright. "It's so cold there that they can skate all the year round; but he beats them, all the same."

The Captain was sitting in a queer little bowl of a skiff on the deck of his tug, and rocking it like a cradle as he talked.

"Bosting's always hard to beat in anything," rejoined the ex-Chairman. "But if Bosting is to be beat, here's the man to do it."

And now, perhaps, gentle reader, you think I have said enough in behalf of a limited fraternity, the Skaters.

The next chapter, then, shall take up the cause of the Lovers, a more numerous body, and we will see whether True Love, which never makes "smooth running," can help its progress by a skate-blade.

## VI.

"GO NOT, HAPPY DAY, TILL THE MAIDEN YIELDS."

CHRISTMAS noon at Dunderbunk. Every skater was in galloping glee, as the electric air, and the sparkling sun, and the glinting ice had a right to expect that they all should be.

Belle Purtett, skating simply and well, had never

looked so pretty and graceful. So thought Bill Tarbox. He had not spoken to her, nor she to him, for more than six months. The poor fellow was ashamed of himself and penitent for his past bad courses. And so, though he longed to have his old flame recognize him again, and though he was bitterly jealous and miserably afraid he should lose her, he had kept away and consumed his heart like a true despairing lover.

But to-day Bill was a lion, only second to Wade, the unapproachable lion-in-chief. Bill was reinstated in public esteem, and had won back his standing in the Foundry. He had to-day made a speech which Perry Purtett gave everybody to understand "none of Senator Bill Seward's could hold the tallow to." Getting up the meeting and presenting Wade with the skates was Bill's own scheme, and it had turned out an eminent success. Everything began to look bright to him. His past life drifted out of his mind like the rowdy tales he used to read in the Sunday newspapers.

He had watched Belle Purtett all the morning, and saw that she distinguished nobody with her smiles, not even that *coq du village*, Ringdove. He also observed that she was furtively watching him.

By and by she sailed out of the crowd, and went off a little way to practise.

"Now," said he to himself, "sail in, Bill Tarbox!"

Belle heard the sharp strokes of a powerful skater coming after her. Her heart divined who this might be. She sped away like the swift Camilla, and her modest drapery showed just enough and *ne quid nimis* of her ankles.

Bill admired the grace and the ankles immensely. But his hopes sank a little at the flight, — for he thought she perceived his chase and meant to drop him. Bill had not had a classical education, and knew nothing of Galatea in the Eclogue, — how she did not hide until she saw her swain was looking fondly after.

“She wants to get away,” he thought. “But she sha’ n’t, — no, not if I have to follow her to Albany.”

He struck out mightily. Presently the swift Camilla let herself be overtaken.

“Good morning, Miss Purtett.” (Dogged air.)

“Good morning, Mr. Tarbox.” (Taken-by-surprise air.)

“I’ve been admiring your skating,” says Bill, trying to be cool.

“Have you?” rejoins Belle, very cool and distant.

“Have you been long on the ice?” he inquired, hypocritically.

“I came on two hours ago with Mr. Ringdove and the girls,” returned she, with a twinkle which said, “Take that, sir, for pretending you did not see me.”

“You’ve seen Mr. Wade skate, then,” Bill said, ignoring Ringdove.

“Yes; is n’t it splendid?” Belle replied, kindling.

“Tiptop!”

“But then he does everything better than anybody.”

“So he does!” Bill said, — true to his friend, and yet beginning to be jealous of this enthusiasm. It was not the first time he had been jealous of Wade; but he had quelled his fears, like a good fellow.

Belle perceived Bill’s jealousy, and could have cried



for joy. She had known as little of her once lover's heart as he of hers. She only knew that he stopped coming to see her when he fell, and had not renewed his visits now that he was risen again. If she had not been charmingly ruddy with the brisk air and exercise, she would have betrayed her pleasure at Bill's jealousy with a fine blush.

The sense of recovered power made her wish to use it again. She must tease him a little. So she continued, as they skated on in good rhythm, —

"Mother and I wouldn't know what to do without Mr. Wade. We like him *so* much," — said ardently.

What Bill feared was true, then, he thought. Wade, noble fellow, worthy to win any woman's heart, had fascinated his landlady's daughter.

"I don't wonder you like him," said he. "He deserves it."

Belle was touched by her old lover's forlorn tone.

"He does indeed," she said. "He has helped and taught us all so much. He has taken such good care of Perry. And then" — here she gave her companion a little look and a little smile — "he speaks so kindly of you, Mr. Tarbox."

Smile, look, and words electrified Bill. He gave such a spring on his skates that he shot far ahead of the lady. He brought himself back with a sharp turn.

"He has done kinder than he can speak," says Bill. "He has made a man of me again, Miss Belle."

"I know it. It makes me very happy to hear you able to say so of yourself." She spoke gravely.

"Very happy" — about anything that concerned him?

Bill had to work off his over-joy at this by an exuberant flourish. He whisked about Belle, — outer edge backward. She stopped to admire. He finished by describing on the virgin ice, before her, the letters B. P., in his neatest style of podography, — easy letters to make, luckily.

“Beautiful!” exclaimed Belle. “What are those letters? Oh! B. P.! What do they stand for?”

“Guess!”

“I’m so dull,” said she, looking bright as a diamond.

“Let me think! B. P.? British Poets, perhaps.”

“Try nearer home!”

“What are you likely to be thinking of that begins with B. P.? O, I know! Boiler Plates!”

She looked at him, — innocent as a lamb. Bill looked at her, delighted with her little coquetry. A woman without coquetry is insipid as a rose without scent, as champagne without bubbles, or as corned beef without mustard.

“It’s something I’m thinking of most of the time,” says he; “but I hope it’s softer than Boiler Plates. B. P. stands for Miss Isabella Purtett.”

“Oh!” says Belle, and she skated on in silence.

“You came down with Alonzo Ringdove?” Bill asked, suddenly, aware of another pang after a moment of peace.

“He came with me and his sisters,” she replied.

Yes; poor Ringdove had dressed himself in his shiniest black, put on his brightest patent-leather boots, with his new swan-necked skates newly strapped over them, and wore his new dove-colored overcoat with the long skirts,

on purpose to be lovely in the eyes of Belle on this occasion. Alas, in vain !

“ Mr. Ringdove is a great friend of yours, is n't he ? ”

“ If you ever came to see me now, you would know who my friends are, Mr. Tarbox.”

“ Would you be my friend again, if I came ? ”

“ Again ? I have always been so, — always, Bill.”

“ Well, then, something more than my friend, — now that I am trying to be worthy of more, Belle ? ”

“ What more can I be ? ” she said, softly.

“ My wife.”

She curved to the right. He followed. To the left. He was not to be shaken off.

“ Will you promise me not to say *valves* instead of *valves*, Bill ? ” she said, looking pretty and saucy as could be. “ I know, to say W for V is fashionable in the iron business ; but I don't like it.”

“ What a thing a woman is to dodge ! ” says Bill. “ Suppose I told you that men brought up inside of boilers, hammering on the inside against twenty hammering like Wulcans on the outside, get their ears so dumfounded that they can't tell whether they are saying *valves* or *walves*, *wice* or *virtue*, — suppose I told you that, — what would you say, Belle ? ”

“ Perhaps I'd say that you pronounce *virtue* so well, and act it so sincerely, that I can't make any objection to your other words. If you'd asked me to be your *wife*, Bill, I might have said I didn't understand ; but *wife* I do understand, and I say — ”

She nodded, and tried to skate off. Bill stuck close to her side.

"Is this true, Belle?" he said, almost doubtfully.

"True as truth!"

She put out her hand. He took it, and they skated on together, — hearts beating to the rhythm of their movements. The uproar and merriment of the village came only faintly to them. It seemed as if all Nature was hushed to listen to their plighted troth, their words of love renewed, more earnest for long suppression. The beautiful ice spread before them, like their life to come, a pathway untouched by any sorrowful or weary footstep. The blue sky was cloudless. The keen air stirred the pulses like the vapor of frozen wine. The benignant mountains westward kindly surveyed the happy pair, and the sun seemed created to warm and cheer them.

"And you forgive me, Belle?" said the lover. "I feel as if I had only gone bad to make me know how much better going right is."

"I always knew you would find it out. I never stopped hoping and praying for it."

"That must have been what brought Mr. Wade here."

"O, I did hate him so, Bill, when I heard of something that happened between you and him! I thought him a brute and a tyrant. I never could get over it, until he told mother that you were the best machinist he ever knew, and would some time grow to be a great inventor."

"I'm glad you hated him. I suffered rattlesnakes and collapsed flues for fear you'd go and love him."

"My affections were engaged," she said with simple seriousness.

"O, if I'd only thought so long ago! How lovely

you are!" exclaims Bill, in an ecstasy. "And how refined! And how good! God bless you!"

He made up such a wishful mouth,—so wishful for one of the pleasurable duties of mouths, that Belle blushed, laughed, and looked down, and as she did so saw that one of her straps was trailing.

"Please fix it, Bill," she said, stopping and kneeling.

Bill also knelt, and his wishful mouth immediately took its chance.

A manly smack and sweet little feminine chirp sounded as their lips met.

Boom! twanging gay as the first tap of a marriage-bell, a loud crack in the ice rang musically for leagues up and down the river. "Bravo!" it seemed to say. "Well done, Bill 'Tarbox! Try again!" Which the happy fellow did, and the happy maiden permitted.

"Now," said Bill, "let us go and hug Mr. Wade!"

"What! Both of us?" Belle protested. "Mr. Tarbox, I am ashamed of you!"

## VII.

### WADE DOWN.

THE hugging of Wade by the happy pair had to be done metaphorically, since it was done in the sight of all Dunderbunk.

He had divined a happy result, when he missed Bill Tarbox from the arena, and saw him a furlong away, hand in hand with his reconciled sweetheart.

"I envy you, Bill," said he, "almost too much to put proper fervor into my congratulations."

"Your time will come," the foreman rejoined.

And says Belle, "I am sure there is a lady skating somewhere, and only waiting for you to follow her."

"I don't see her," Wade replied, looking with a mock-grave face up and down and athwart the river. "When you've all gone to dinner, I'll prospect ten miles up and down, and try to find a good matrimonial claim that's not taken."

"You will not come up to dinner?" Belle asked.

"I can hardly afford to make two bites of a holiday," said Wade. "I've sent Perry up for a luncheon. Here he comes with it. So I cede my quarter of your pie, Miss Belle, to a better fellow."

"Oh!" cries Perry, coming up and bowing elaborately. "Mr. and Mrs. Tarbox, I believe. Ah, yes! Well, I will mention it up at Albany. I am going to take my Guards up to call on the Governor."

Perry dashed off, followed by a score of Dunderbunk boys, organized by him as the Purtett Guards, and taught to salute him as Generalissimo with military honors.

So many hundreds of turkeys, done to a turn, now began to have an effect upon the atmosphere. Few odors are more subtle and pervading than this, and few more appetizing. Indeed, there is said to be an odd fellow, a strictly American gourmand, in New York, who sits from noon to dusk on Christmas Day up in a tall steeple, merely to catch the aroma of roast turkey floating over the city, — and much good, it is said, it does him.

Hard skating is nearly as effective to whet hunger as

this gentleman's expedient. When the spicy breezes began to blow soft as those of Ceylon's isle over the river and every whiff talked Turkey, the population of Dunderbunk listened to the wooing and began to follow its several noses — snubs, beaks, blunts, sharps, piquants, dominants, fines, bulgies, and bifids — on the way to the several households which those noses adorned or defaced. Prosperous Dunderbunk had a Dinner, yes, a DINNER, that day, and Richard Wade was gratefully remembered by many over-fed foundry-men and their over-fed families.

Wade had not had half skating enough.

"I'll time myself down to Skerrett's Point," he thought, "and take my luncheon there among the hemlocks."

The Point was on the property of Peter Skerrett, Wade's friend and college comrade of ten years gone. Peter had been an absentee in Europe, and smokes from his chimneys this morning had confirmed to Wade's eyes the rumor of his return.

Skerrett's Point was a mile below the Foundry. Our hero did his mile under three minutes. How many seconds under, I will not say. I do not wish to make other fellows unhappy.

The Point was a favorite spot of Wade's. Many a twilight of last summer, tired with his fagging at the Works to make good the evil of Whiffler's rule, he had lain there on the rocks under the hemlocks, breathing the spicy methyl they poured into the air. After his day's hard fight, in the dust and heat of the Foundry, with anarchy and unthrift, he used to take the quiet

restoratives of Nature, until the murmur and fragrance of the woods, the cool wind, and the soothing loiter of the shining stream had purged him from the fevers of his task.

To this old haunt he skated, and kindling a little fire, as an old campaigner loves to do, he sat down and lunched heartily on Mrs. Purtett's cold leg, — cannibal thought! — on the cold leg of Mrs. Purtett's yesterday's turkey. Then lighting his weed, — dear ally of the lonely, — the Superintendent began to think of his foreman's bliss, and to long for something similar on his own plane.

"I hope the wish is father to its fulfilment," he said. "But I must not stop here and be spooney. Such a halcyon day I may not have again in all my life, and I ought to make the best of it, with my New Skates."

So he dashed off, and filled the little cove above the Point with a labyrinth of curves and flourishes.

When that bit of crystal tablet was well covered, the podographer sighed for a new sheet to inscribe his intricate rubricas upon. Why not write more stanzas of the poetry of motion on the ice below the Point? Why not?

Braced by his lunch on the brown fibre of good Mrs. Purtett's cold drumstick and thigh, Wade was now in fine trim. The air was more glittering and electric than ever. It was triumph and victory and pæan in action to go flashing along over this footing, smoother than polished marble and sheenier than first-water gems.

Wade felt the high exhilaration of pure blood galloping through a body alive from top to toe. The rhythm of his movement was like music to him.



The Point ended in a sharp promontory. Just before he came abreast of it, Wade under mighty headway flung into his favorite corkscrew spiral on one foot, and went whirling dizzily along, round and round, in a straight line.

At the dizziest moment he was suddenly aware of a figure, also turning the Point at full speed, and rushing to a collision.

He jerked aside to avoid it. He could not look to his footing. His skate struck a broken oar, imbedded in the ice. He fell violently, and lay like a dead man.

His New Skates, Testimonial of Merit, seem to have served him a shabby trick.

## VIII.

### TÊTE-À-TÊTE.

SEEING Wade lie there motionless, the lady —

Took off her spectacles, blew her great red nose, and stiffly drew near.

Spectacles! Nose! No, — the latter feature of hers had never become acquainted with the former; and there was as little stiffness as nasal redness about her.

A fresh start, then, — and this time accuracy!

Appalled by the loud thump of the stranger's skull upon the chief river of the State of New York, the lady — it was a young lady whom Wade had tumbled to avoid — turned, saw a human being lying motionless, and swept gracefully toward him, like a Good Samaritan, on the outer edge. It was not her fault, but her des-

tiny, that she had to be graceful even under these tragic circumstances.

"Dead!" she thought. "Is he dead?"

The appalling thump had cracked the ice, and she could not know how well the skull was cushioned inside with brains to resist a blow.

She shuddered as she swooped about toward this possible corpse. It might be that he was killed, and half the fault hers. No wonder her fine color, shining in the right parts of an admirably drawn face, all disappeared instantly.

But she evidently was not frightened. She halted, kneeled, looked curiously at the stranger, and then proceeded, in a perfectly cool and self-possessed way, to pick him up.

A solid fellow, heavy to lift in his present lumpish condition of dead-weight! She had to tug mightily to get him up into a sitting position. When he was raised, all the backbone seemed gone from his spine, and it took the whole force of her vigorous arms to sustain him.

The effort was enough to account for the return of her color. It came rushing back splendidly. Cheeks, forehead, everything but nose, blushed. The hard work of lifting so much *avoirdupois*, and possibly, also, the novelty of supporting so much handsome fellow, intensified all her hues. Her eyes — blue, or that shade even more faithful than blue — deepened; and her pale golden hair grew several carats — not carrots — brighter.

She was repaid for her active sympathy at once by discovering that this big, awkward thing was not a dead, but only a stunned body. It had an ugly bump and a

bleeding cut on its manly skull, but otherwise was quite an agreeable object to contemplate, and plainly on its "unembarrassed brow Nature had written 'Gentleman.'"

As this young lady had never had a fair, steady stare at a stunned hero before, she seized her advantage. She had hitherto been distant with the other sex. She had no brother. Not one of her male cousins had ever ventured near enough to get those cousinly privileges that timid cousins sigh for and plucky cousins take, if they are worth taking.

Wade's impressive face, though for the moment blind as a statue's, also seized its advantage and stared at her intently, with a pained and pleading look, new to those resolute features.

Wade was entirely unconscious of the great hit he had made by his tumble — plump into the arms of this heroine! There were fellows extant who would have suffered any imaginable amputation, any conceivable mauling, any fling from the apex of anything into the lowest deeps of anywhere, for the honor he was now enjoying.

But all he knew was that his skull was a beehive in an uproar, and that one lobe of his brain was struggling to swarm off. His legs and arms felt as if they belonged to another man, and a very limp one at that. A ton of cast-iron seemed to be pressing his eyelids down, and a trickle of red-hot metal flowed from his cut forehead.

"I shall have to scream," thought the lady, after an instant of anxious waiting, "if he does not revive. I cannot leave him to go for help."

Not a prude, you see. A prude would have had cheap scruples about compromising herself by taking a man in

her arms. Not a vulgar person, who would have required the stranger to be properly recommended by somebody who came over in the *Mayflower*, before she helped him. Not a feeble-minded damsel, who, if she had not fainted, would have fled away, gasping and in tears. No timidity or prudery or underbred doubts about this thorough creature. She knew she was in her right womanly place, and she meant to stay there.

But she began to need help, possibly a lancet, possibly a pocket-pistol, possibly hot blankets, possibly somebody to knead these lifeless lungs and pommel this flaccid body until circulation was restored.

Just as she was making up her mind to scream, Wade stirred. He began to tingle as if a familiar of the Inquisition were slapping him all over with fine-toothed curry-combs. He became half conscious of a woman supporting him. In a stammering and intoxicated voice he murmured, —

“ ‘ Who ran to catch me when I fell,  
And kissed the place to make it well ?  
My — ’ ”

He opened his eyes. It was not his mother ; for she was long since deceased. Nor was this non-mother kissing the place.

In fact, abashed at the blind eyes suddenly unclosing so near her, she was on the point of letting her burden drop. When dead men come to life in such a position, and begin to talk about “ kissing the place,” young ladies, however independent of conventions, may well grow uneasy.

But the stranger, though alive, was evidently in a

molluscous, invertebrate condition. He could not sustain himself. She still held him up, a little more at arm's-length, and all at once the reaction from extreme anxiety brought a gush of tears to her eyes.

"Don't cry," says Wade, vaguely, and still only half conscious. "I promise never to do so again."

At this, said with a childlike earnestness, the lady smiled.

"Don't scalp me," Wade continued, in the same tone. "Squaws never scalp."

He raised his hand to his bleeding forehead.

She laughed outright at his queer plaintive tone and the new class he had placed her in.

Her laugh and his own movement brought Wade fully to himself. She perceived that his look was transferring her from the order of scalping squaws to her proper place as a beautiful young woman of the highest civilization, not smeared with vermilion, but blushing celestial rosy.

"Thank you," said Wade. "I can sit up now without assistance." And he regretted profoundly that good breeding obliged him to say so.

She withdrew her arms. He rested on the ice, — posture of the Dying Gladiator. She made an effort to be cool and distant as usual; but it would not do. This weak mighty man still interested her. It was still her business to be strength to him.

He made a feeble attempt to wipe away the drops of blood from his forehead with his handkerchief.

"Let me be your surgeon!" said she.

She produced her own folded handkerchief, — M. D.

were the initials in the corner, — and neatly and tenderly turbaned him.

Wade submitted with delight to this treatment. A tumble with such trimmings was luxury indeed.

“Who would not break his head,” he thought, “to have these delicate fingers plying about him, and this pure, noble face so close to his? What a queenly indifferent manner she has! What a calm brow! What honest eyes! What a firm nose! What equable cheeks! What a grand indignant mouth! Not a bit afraid of me! She feels that I am a gentleman and will not presume.”

“There!” said she, drawing back. “Is that comfortable?”

“Luxury!” he ejaculated with fervor.

“I am afraid I am to blame for your terrible fall.”

“No; my own clumsiness and that oar-blade are in fault.”

“If you feel well enough to be left alone, I will skate off and call my friends.”

“Please do not leave me quite yet!” says Wade, entirely satisfied with the *tête-à-tête*.

“Ah! here comes Mr. Skerrett round the Point!” she said, and sprang up, looking a little guilty.

## IX.

### LOVE IN THE FIRST DEGREE.

PETER SKERRETT came sailing round the purple rocks of his Point, skating like a man who has been in the South of Europe for two winters.

He was decidedly Anglicized in his whiskers, coat, and shoes. Otherwise he in all respects repeated his well-known ancestor, Skerrett of the Revolution, whose two portraits — 1. A ruddy hero in regimentals, in Gilbert Stuart's early brandy-and-water manner; 2. A rosy sage in senatorials, in Stuart's later claret-and-water manner — hang in his descendant's dining-room.

Peter's first look was a provokingly significant one at the confused and blushing young lady. Secondly he inspected the Dying Gladiator on the ice.

"Have you been tilting at this gentleman, Mary?" he asked, in the voice of a cheerful, friendly fellow. "Why! Hullo! Hooray! It's Wade, Richard Wade, Dick Wade! Don't look, Miss Mary, while I give him the grips of all the secret societies we belonged to in College."

Mary, however, did look on, pleased and amused, while Peter plumped down on the ice, shook his friend's hand, and examined him as if he were fine crockery, spilt and perhaps shattered.

"It's not a case of trepanning, Dick?" said he.

"No," said the other. "I tumbled in trying to dodge this lady. The ice thought my face ought to be scratched, because I had been scratching its face without mercy. My wits were knocked out of me; but they are tired of secession, and pleading to be let in again."

"Keep some of them out for our sake! We must have you at our commonplace level. Well, Miss Mary, I suppose this is the first time you have had the sensation of breaking a man's head. You generally hit lower." Peter tapped his heart.

"I'm all right now, thanks to my surgeon," says Wade. "Give me a lift, Peter." He pulled up and clung to his friend.

"You're the vine and I'm the lamp-post," Skerrett said. "Mary, do you know what a pocket-pistol is?"

"I have seen such weapons concealed about the persons of modern warriors."

"There's one in my overcoat-pocket, with a cup at the but and a cork at the muzzle. Skate off now, like an angel, and get it. Bring Fanny too. She is restorative."

"Are you alive enough to admire that, Dick?" he continued, as she skimmed away.

"It would put a soul under the ribs of Death."

"I venerate that young woman," says Peter. "You see what a beauty she is, and just as unspoiled as this ice. Unspoiled beauties are rarer than roc's eggs."

"She has a singularly true face," Wade replied, "and that is the main thing, — the most excellent thing in man or woman."

"Yes, truth makes that nuisance, beauty, tolerable."

"You did not do me the honor to present me."

"I saw you had gone a great way beyond that, my boy. Have you not her initials in cambrie on your brow? Not M. T., which would n't apply; but M. D."

"Mary ——?"

"Damer."

"I like the name," says Wade, repeating it. "It sounds simple and thorough-bred."

"Just what she is. One of the nine simple-hearted and thorough-bred girls on this continent."



“Nine?”

“Is that too many? Three, then. That’s one in ten millions. The exact proportion of Poets, Painters, Orators, Statesmen, and all other Great Artists. Well — three or nine, — Mary Damer is one of them. She never saw fear or jealousy, or knowingly allowed an ignoble thought or an ungentle word or an ungraceful act in herself. Her atmosphere does not tolerate flirtation. You must find out for yourself how much genius she has and has not. But I will say this, that I think of puns two a minute faster when I’m with her. Therefore she must be magnetic, and that is the first charm in a woman.”

Wade laughed. “You have not lost your powers of analysis, Peter. But, talking of this heroine, you have not told me anything about yourself, except *apropos* of punning.”

“Come up and dine, and we’ll fire away personal histories, broadside for broadside! I’ve been looking in vain for a worthy hero to set *vis-à-vis* to my fair kinswoman. But stop! perhaps you have a Christmas turkey at home, with a wife opposite, and a brace of boys waiting for drumsticks.”

“No; my boys, like cherubs, await their own drumsticks. They’re not born, and I’m not married.”

“I thought you looked incomplete and abnormal. Well, I will show you a model wife, — and here she comes!”

Here they came, the two ladies, gliding round the Point, with draperies floating as artlessly artful as the robes of Raphael’s Hours, or a Pompeian Bacchante.

For want of classic vase or *patera*, Miss Damer brandished Peter Skerrett's pocket-pistol.

Fanny Skerrett gave her hand cordially to Wade, and looked a little anxiously at his pale face.

"Now, M. D.," says Peter, "you have been surgeon, you shall be doctor and dose our patient. Now, then, —

‘ Hebe, pour free !  
Quicken his eyes with mountain-dew,  
That Styx, the detested,  
No more he may view.’ ”

.. “ ‘ Thanks, Hebe ! ’ ”

Wade said, continuing the quotation, —

“ ‘ I quaff it !  
Io Pæan, I cry !  
The whiskey of the Immortals  
Forbids me to die.’ ”

“ We effeminate women of the nineteenth century are afraid of broken heads,” said Fanny. “ But Mary Damer seems quite to enjoy your accident, Mr. Wade, as an adventure.”

Miss Damer certainly did seem gay and exhilarated.

“ I enjoy it,” said Wade. “ I perceive that I fell on my feet, when I fell on my crown. I tumbled among old friends, and I hope among new ones.”

“ I have been waiting to claim my place among your old friends,” Mrs. Skerrett said, “ ever since Peter told me you were one of his models.”

She delivered this little speech with a caressing manner which totally fascinated Wade.

Nothing was ever so absolutely pretty as Mrs. Peter Skerrett. Her complete prettiness left nothing to be desired.

"Never," thought Wade, "did I see such a compact little casket of perfections. Every feature is thoroughly well done and none intrusively superior. Her little nose is a combination of all the amiabilities. Her black eyes sparkle with fun and mischief and wit, all playing over deep tenderness below. Her hair ripples itself full of gleams and shadows. The same coquetry of Nature that rippled her hair has dinted her cheeks with shifting dimples. Every time she smiles—and she smiles as if sixty an hour were not half allowance—a dimple slides into view and vanishes like a dot in a flow of sunny water. And, O Peter Skerrett! if you were not the best fellow in the world, I should envy you that latent kiss of a mouth."

"You need not say it, Wade,—your broken head exempts you from the business of compliments," said Peter; "but I see you think my wife perfection. You'll think so the more, the more you know her."

"Stop, Peter," said she, "or I shall have to hide behind the superior charms of Mary Damer."

Miss Damer certainly was a woman of a grander order. You might pull at the bells or knock at the knockers and be introduced into the boudoirs of all the houses, villas, seats, châteaux, and palaces in Christendom without seeing such another. She belonged distinctly to the Northern races,—the "brave and true and tender" women. There was, indeed, a trace of hauteur and imperiousness in her look and manner; but it did not ill

become her distinguished figure and face. Wade, however, remembered her sweet earnestness when she was playing leach to his wound, and chose to take that mood as her dominant one.

"She must have been desperately annoyed with bores and boobies," he thought. "I do not wonder she protects herself by distance. I am afraid I shall never get within her lines again, — not even if I should try slow and regular approaches, and bombard her with bouquets for a twelvemonth."

"But, Wade," says Peter, "all this time you have not told us what good luck sends you here to be wrecked on the hospitable shores of my Point."

"I live here. I am chief cook and confectioner where you see the smoking top of that tall chimney up stream."

"Why, of course! What a dolt I was, not to think of you, when Churm told us an Athlete, a Brave, a Sage, and a Gentleman was the Superintendent of Dunderbunk; but said we must find his name out for ourselves. You remember, Mary. Miss Damer is Mr. Churm's ward."

She acknowledged with a cool bow that she did remember her guardian's character of Wade.

"You do not say, Peter," says Mrs. Skerrett, with a bright little look at the other lady, "why Mr. Churm was so mysterious about Mr. Wade."

"Miss Damer shall tell us," Peter rejoined, repeating his wife's look of merry significance.

She looked somewhat teased. Wade could divine easily the meaning of this little mischievous talk. His friend Churm had no doubt puffed him furiously.

"All this time," said Miss Damer, evading a reply, "we are neglecting our skating privileges."

"Peter and I have a few grains of humanity in our souls," Fanny said. "We should blush to sail away from Mr. Wade, while he carries the quarantine flag at his pale cheeks."

"I am almost ruddy again," says Wade. "Your potion, Miss Damer, has completed the work of your surgery. I can afford to dismiss my lamp-post."

"Whereupon the post changes to a teetotum," Peter said, and spun off in an eccentric, ending in a tumble.

"I must have a share in your restoration, Mr. Wade," Fanny claimed. "I see you need a second dose of medicine. Hand me the flask, Mary. What shall I pour from this magic bottle? juice of Rhine, blood of Burgundy, fire of Spain, bubble of Rheims, beeswing of Oporto, honey of Cyprus, nectar, or whiskey? Whiskey is vulgar, but the proper thing, on the whole, for these occasions. I prescribe it." And she gave him another little draught to imbibe.

He took it kindly, for her sake, — and not alone for that, but for its own respectable sake. His recovery was complete. His head, to be sure, sang a little still, and ached not a little. Some fellows would have gone on the sick list with such a wound. Perhaps he would, if he had had a trouble to dodge. But here instead was a pleasure to follow. So he began to move about slowly, watching the ladies.

Fanny was a novice in the Art, and this was her first day this winter. She skated timidly, holding Peter very tightly. She went into the dearest little panics for fear

of tumbles, and uttered the most musical screams and laughs. And if she succeeded in taking a few brave strokes and finished with a neat slide, she pleaded for a verdict of "Well done!" with such an appealing smile and such a fine show of dimples that every one was fascinated and applauded heartily.

Miss Damer skated as became her free and vigorous character. She had passed her Little Go as a scholar, and was now steadily winning her way through the list of achievements, before given, toward the Great Go. To-day she was at work at small circles backward. Presently she wound off a series of perfectly neat ones, and, looking up, pleased with her prowess, caught Wade's admiring eye. At this she smiled and gave an arch little womanly nod of self-approval, which also demanded masculine sympathy before it was quite a perfect emotion.

With this charming gesture, the alert feather in her Amazonian hat nodded, too, as if it admired its lovely mistress.

Wade was thrilled. "Brava!" he cried, in answer to the part of her look which asked sympathy; and then, in reply to the implied challenge, he forgot his hurt and his shock, and struck into the same figure.

He tried not to surpass his fair exemplar too cruelly. But he did his peripheries well enough to get a repetition of the captivating nod and a Bravo! from the lady.

"Bravo!" said she. "But do not tax your strength too soon."

She began to feel that she was expressing too much interest in the stranger. It was a new sensation for her to care whether men fell or got up. A new sensation.

She rather liked it. She was a trifle ashamed of it. In either case, she did not wish to show that it was in her heart. The consciousness of concealment flushed her damask cheek.

It was a damask cheek. All her hues were cool and pearly; while Wade, Saxon too, had hot golden tints in his hair and mustache, and his color, now returning, was good strong red with plenty of bronze in it.

"Thank you," he replied. "My force has all come back. You have electrified me."

A civil nothing: but meaning managed to get into his tone and look, whether he would or not.

Which he perceiving, on his part began to feel guilty. Of what crime?

Of the very same crime as hers, — the most ancient and most pardonable crime of youth and maiden, — that sweet and guiltless crime of love in the first degree.

So, without troubling themselves to analyze their feelings, they found a piquant pleasure in skating together, — she in admiring his *tours de force*, and he in instructing her.

"Look, Peter!" said Mrs. Skerrett, pointing to the other pair skating, he on the backward roll, she on the forward, with hands crossed and locked; — such contacts are permitted in skating, as in dancing. "Your hero and my heroine have dropped into an intimacy."

"None but the Plucky deserve the Pretty," says Peter.

"But he seems to be such a fine fellow, — suppose she should n't —"

The pretty face looked anxious.

"Suppose *he* should n't," Peter on the masculine behalf returned.

"He cannot help it: Mary is so noble, — and so charming, when she does not disdain to be."

"I do not believe *she* can help it. She cannot disdain Wade. He carries too many guns for that. He is just as fine as she is. He was a hero when I first knew him. His face does not show an atom of change; and you know what Mr. Churm told us of his chivalric deeds elsewhere, and how he tamed and reformed Dunderbunk. He is crystal grit, as crystalline and gritty as he can be."

"Grit seems to be your symbol of the highest qualities. It certainly is a better thing in man than in ice-cream. But, Peter, suppose this should be a true love and should not run smooth?"

"What consequence is the smooth running, so long as there is strong running and a final getting in neck and neck at the winning-post?"

"But," still pleaded the anxious soul, — having no anxieties of her own, she was always suffering for others, — "he seems to be such a fine fellow! and she is so hard to win!"

"Am I a fine fellow?"

"No, — horrid!"

"The truth, — or I let you tumble."

"Well, upon compulsion, I admit that you are."

"Then being a fine fellow does not diminish the said fellow's chances of being blessed with a wife quite superfine."

"If I thought you were personal, Peter, I should object to the mercantile adjective. 'Superfine,' indeed!"



"I am personal. I withdraw the obnoxious phrase, and substitute transcendent. No, Fanny dear, I read Wade's experience in my own. I do not feel very much concerned about him. He is big enough to take care of himself. A man who is sincere, self-possessed, and steady does not get into miseries with beautiful Amazons like our friend. He knows too much to try to make his love run up hill; but let it once get started, rough running gives it *vim*. Wade will love like a deluge, when he sees that he may, and I'd advise obstacles to stand off."

"It was pretty, Peter, to see cold Mary Damer so gentle and almost tender."

"I always have loved to see the first beginnings of what looks like love, since I saw ours."

"Ours," she said, — "it seems like yesterday."

And then together they recalled that fair picture against its dark ground of sorrow, and so went on refreshing the emotions of that time until Fanny smiling said, —

"There must be something magical in skates, for here we are talking sentimentally like a pair of young lovers."

"Health and love are cause and effect," says Peter, sententiously.

Meanwhile Wade had been fast skating into the good graces of his companion. Perhaps the rap on his head had deranged him. He certainly tossed himself about in a reckless and insane way. Still he justified his conduct by never tumbling again, and by inventing new devices with bewildering rapidity.

This pair were not at all sentimental. Indeed, their talk was quite technical: all about rings and edges, and heel and toe, — what skates are best, and who best use

them. There is an immense amount of sympathy to be exchanged on such topics, and it was somewhat significant that they avoided other themes where they might not sympathize so thoroughly. The negative part of a conversation is often as important as its positive.

So the four entertained themselves finely, sometimes as a quartette, sometimes as two duos with proper changes of partners, until the clear west began to grow golden and the clear east pink with sunset.

"It is a pity to go," said Peter Skerrett. "Everything here is perfection and Fine Art; but we must not be unfaithful to dinner. Dinner would have a right to punish us, if we did not encourage its efforts to be Fine Art also."

"Now, Mr. Wade," Fanny commanded, "your most heroic series of exploits, to close this heroic day."

He nimbly dashed through his list. The ice was traced with a labyrinth of involuted convolutions.

Wade's last turn brought him to the very spot of his tumble.

"Ah!" said he. "Here is the oar that tripped me, with 'Wade, his mark,' gashed into it. If I had not this" — he touched Miss Damer's handkerchief — "for a souvenir, I think I would dig up the oar and carry it home."

"Let it melt out and float away in the spring," Mary said. "It may be a perch for a sea-gull or a buoy for a drowning man."

Here, if this were a long story instead of a short one, might be given a description of Peter Skerrett's house and the *menu* of Mrs. Skerrett's dinner. Peter and his

wife had both been to great pillory dinners, *ad nauseam*, and learnt what to avoid. How not to be bored is the object of all civilization, and the Skerretts had discovered the methods.

I must dismiss the dinner and the evening, stamped with the general epithet, Perfection.

"You will join us again to-morrow on the river," said Mrs. Skerrett, as Wade rose to go.

"To-morrow I go to town to report to my Directors."

"Then next day."

"Next day, with pleasure."

Wade departed, and marked this halcyon day with white chalk, as the whitest, brightest, sweetest of his life.

## X.

### FOREBODINGS.

JUBILATION! Jubilation now, instead of Consternation, in the office of Mr. Benjamin Brummage in Wall Street.

President Brummage had convoked his Directors to hear the First Semiannual Report of the new Superintendent and Dictator of Dunderbunk.

And there they sat around the green table, no longer forlorn and dreading a failure, but all chuckling with satisfaction over their prosperity.

They were a happy and hilarious family now, — so hilarious that the President was obliged to be always rapping to Orderr with his paper-knife.

Every one of these gentlemen was proud of himself as

a Director of so successful a Company. The Dunderbunk advertisement might now consider itself as permanent in the newspapers, and the Treasurer had very unnecessarily inserted the notice of a dividend, which everybody knew of already.

When Mr. Churm was not by, they all claimed the honor of having discovered Wade, or at least of having been the first to appreciate him.

They all invited him to dinner, — the others at their houses, Sam Gwelp at his club.

They had not yet begun to wax fat and kick. They still remembered the panic of last summer. They passed a unanimous vote of the most complimentary confidence in Wade, approved of his system, forced upon him an increase of salary, and began to talk of “launching out” and doubling their capital. In short, they behaved as Directors do when all is serene.

Churm and Wade had a hearty laugh over the absurdities of the Board and all their vague propositions.

“Dunderbunk,” said Churm, “was a company started on a sentimental basis, as many others are.”

“Mr. Brunmage fell in love with pig-iron?”

“Precisely. He had been a dry-goods jobber, risen from a retailer somewhere in the country. He felt a certain lack of dignity in his work. He wanted to deal in something more masculine than lace and ribbons. He read a sentimental article on Iron in the ‘Journal of Commerce’: how Iron held the world together; how it was nerve and sinew; how it was ductile and malleable and other things that sounded big; how without Iron civilization would stop, and New-Zealanders hunt rats

among the ruins of London ; how anybody who would make two tons of Iron grow where one grew before was a benefactor to the human race greater than Alexander, Cæsar, or Napoleon ; and so on, — you know the eloquent style. Brummage's soul was fired. He determined to be greater than the three heroes named. He was oozing with unoccupied capital. He went about among the other rich jobbers, with the newspaper article in his hand, and fired their souls. They determined to be great Iron Kings, — magnificent thought ! They wanted to read in the newspapers, 'If all the iron rails made at the Dunderbunk Works in the last six months were put together in a straight line, they would reach twice round our terraqueous globe and seventy-three miles two rails over.' So on that poetic foundation they started the concern."

Wade laughed. "But how did you happen to be with them ?"

"Oh ! my friend Damer sold them the land for the shop and took stock in payment. I came into the Board as his executor. Did I never tell you so before ?"

"No."

"Well, then, be informed that it was in Miss Damer's behalf that you knocked down Friend Tarbox, and so got your skates for saving her property. It's quite a romance already, Richard, my boy ! and I suppose you feel immensely bored that you had to come down and meet us old chaps, instead of tumbling at her feet on the ice again to-day."

"A tumble in this wet day would be a cold bath to romance."

The Gulf Stream had sent up a warm spoil-sport rain that morning. It did not stop, but poured furiously the whole day.

From Cohoes to Spuyten Duyvil, on both sides of the river, all the skaters swore at the weather, as profane persons no doubt did when the windows of heaven were opened in Noah's time. The skateresses did not swear, but savagely said, "It is too bad," — and so it was.

Wade, loaded with the blessings of his Directors, took the train next morning for Dunderbunk.

The weather was still mild and drizzly, but promised to clear. As the train rattled along by the river, Wade could see that the thin ice was breaking up everywhere. In mid-stream a procession of blocks was steadily drifting along. Unless Zero came sliding down again pretty soon from Boreal regions, the sheets that filled the coves and clung to the shores would also sail away southward, and the whole Hudson be left clear as in midsummer.

At Yonkers a down train ranged by the side of Wade's train, and, looking out, he saw Mr. and Mrs. Skerrett alighting:

He jumped down, rather surprised, to speak to them.

"We have just been telegraphed here," said Peter, gravely. "The son of a widow, a friend of ours, was drowned this morning in the soft ice of the river. He was a pet of mine, poor fellow! and the mother depends upon me for advice. We have come down to say a kind word. Why won't you report us to the ladies at my house, and say we shall not be at home until the evening train? They do not know the cause of our journey, except that it is a sad one."

"Perhaps Mr. Wade will carve their turkey for them at dinner, Peter," Fanny suggested.

"Do, Wade! and keep their spirits up. Dinner's at six."

Here the engine whistled. Wade promised to "shine substitute" at his friend's board, and took his place again. The train galloped away.

Peter and his wife exchanged a bright look over the fortunate incident of this meeting, and went on their kind way to carry sympathy and such consolation as might be to the widow.

The train galloped northward. Until now, the beat of its wheels, like the click of an enormous metronome, had kept time to jubilant measures singing in Wade's brain. He was hurrying back, exhilarated with success, to the presence of a woman whose smile was finer exhilaration than any number of votes of confidence, passed unanimously by any number of conclaves of overjoyed Directors, and signed by Brummage after Brummage, with the signature of a capitalist in a flurry of delight at a ten per cent dividend.

But into this joyous mood of Wade's the thought of death suddenly intruded. He could not keep a picture of death and drowning out of his mind. As the train sprang along and opened gloomy breadth after breadth of the leaden river, clogged with slow-drifting files of ice-blocks, he found himself staring across the dreary waste and forever fancying some one sinking there, helpless and alone.

He seemed to see a brave, bright-eyed, ruddy boy, venturing out carelessly along the edges of the weakened

ice. Suddenly the ice gives way, the little figure sinks, rises, clutches desperately at a fragment, struggles a moment, is borne along in the relentless flow of the chilly water, stares in vain shoreward, and so sinks again with a look of agony, and is gone.

But whenever this inevitable picture grew before Wade's eyes, as the drowning figure of his fancy vanished, it suddenly changed features, and presented the face of Mary Damer, perishing beyond succor.

Of course he knew that this was but a morbid vision. Yet that it came at all, and that it so agonized him, proved the force of his new feeling.

He had not analyzed it before. This thought of death became its touchstone.

Men like Wade, strong, healthy, earnest, concentrated, straightforward, isolated, judge men and women as friends or foes at once and once for all. He had recognized in Mary Damer from the first a heart as true, whole, noble, and healthy as his own. A fine instinct had told him that she was waiting for her hero, as he was for his heroine.

So he suddenly loved her. And yet not suddenly; for all his life, and all his lesser forgotten or discarded passions, had been training him for this master one.

He suddenly and strongly loved her; and yet it had only been a beautiful bewilderment of uncomprehended delight, until this haunting vision of her fair face sinking amid the hungry ice beset him. Then he perceived what would be lost to him, if she were lost.

The thought of Death placed itself between him and Love. If the love had been merely a pretty remembrance



of a charming woman, he might have dismissed his fancied drowning-scene with a little emotion of regret. Now, the fancy was an agony.

He had too much power over himself to entertain it long. But the grisly thought came uninvited, returned undesired, and no resolute Avaunt, even backed by that magic wand, a cigar, availed to banish it wholly.

The sky cleared cold at eleven o'clock. A sharp wind drew through the Highlands. As the train rattled round the curve below the tunnel through Skerrett's Point, Wade could see his skating course of Christmas Day with the ladies. Firm ice, glazed smooth by the sudden chill after the rain, filled the Cove and stretched beyond the Point into the river.

It was treacherous stuff, beautiful to the eyes of a skater, but sure to be weak, and likely to break up any moment and join the deliberate headlong drift of the masses in mid-current.

Wade almost dreaded lest his vision should suddenly realize itself, and he should see his enthusiastic companion of the other day sailing gracefully along to certain death.

Nothing living, however, was in sight, except here and there a crow, skipping about in the floating ice.

The lover was greatly relieved. He could now forewarn the lady against the peril he had imagined. The train in a moment dropped him at Dunderbunk. He hurried to the Foundry and wrote a note to Mrs. Damer.

"Mr. Wade presents his compliments to Mrs. Damer, and has the honor to inform her that Mr. Skerrett has nominated him carver to the ladies to-day in their host's place.

“Mr. Wade hopes that Miss Damer will excuse him from his engagement to skate with her this afternoon. The ice is dangerous, and Miss Damer should on no account venture upon it.”

Perry Purtett was the bearer of this billet. He swaggered into Peter Skerrett's hall, and dreadfully alarmed the fresh-imported Englishman who answered the bell, by ordering him in a severe tone, —

“Hurry up now, White Cravat, with that answer! I'm wanted down to the Works. Steam don't bile when I'm off; and the fly-wheel will never buzz another turn, unless I'm there to motion it to move on.”

Mrs. Damer's gracious reply informed Wade “that she should be charmed to see him at dinner, etc., and would not fail to transmit his kind warning to Miss Damer, when she returned from her drive to make calls.”

But when Miss Damer returned in the afternoon, her mother was taking a gentle nap over the violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red stripes of a gorgeous Afghan she was knitting. The daughter heard nothing of the billet. The house was lonely without Fanny Skerrett. Mr. Wade did not come at the appointed hour. Mary was not willing to say to herself how much she regretted his absence.

Had he forgotten the appointment?

No, — that was a thought not to be tolerated.

“A gentleman does not forget,” she thought. And she had a thorough confidence, besides, that this gentleman was very willing to remember.

She read a little, fitfully, sang fitfully, moved about the house uneasily; and at last, when it grew late, and she

was bored and Wade did not arrive, she pronounced to herself that he had been detained in town.

This point settled, she took her skates, put on her pretty Amazonian hat with its alert feather, and went down to waste her beauty and grace on the ice, unattended and alone.

## XI.

### CAP'N AMBUSTER'S SKIFF.

It was a busy afternoon at the Dunderbunk Foundry.

The Superintendent had come back with his pocket full of orders. Everybody, from the Czar of Russia to the President of the Guano Republic, was in the market for machinery. Crisis was gone by. Prosperity was come. The world was all ready to move, and only waited for a fresh supply of wheels, cranks, side-levers, walking-beams, and other such muscular creatures of iron, to push and tug and swing and revolve and set Progress a going.

Dunderbunk was to have its full share in supplying the demand. It was well understood by this time that the iron Wade made was as stanch as the man who made it. Dunderbunk, therefore, Head and Hands, must despatch.

So it was a busy afternoon at the industrious Foundry. The men bestirred themselves. The furnaces rumbled. The engine thumped. The drums in the finishing-shop hummed merrily their lively song of labor. The four trip-hammers — two bull-headed, two calf-headed — champed, like carnivorous maws, upon red bars of iron,

and over their banquet they roared the big-toned music of the trip-hammer chorus, —

“Now then! hit hard!

Strike while Iron's hot. Life's short. Art's long.”

By this massive refrain, ringing in at intervals above the ceaseless buzz, murmur, and clang throughout the buildings, every man's work was mightily nerved and inspired. Everybody liked to hear the sturdy song of these grim vocalists; and whenever they struck in, each solo or duo or quatuor of men, playing Anvil Chorus, quickened time, and all the action and rumor of the busy opera went on more cheerily and lustily. So work kept astir like play.

An hour before sunset, Bill Tarbox stepped into Wade's office. Even oily and begrimed, Bill could be recognized as a favored lover. He looked more a man than ever before.

“I forgot to mention,” says the foreman, “that Cap'n Ambuster was in, this morning, to see you. He says that, if the river's clear enough for him to get away from our dock, he'll go down to the City to-morrow, and offers to take freight cheap. We might put that new walking-beam we've just rough-finished for the ‘Union’ aboard of him.”

“Yes, — if he is sure to go to-morrow. It will not do to delay. The owners complained to me yesterday that the ‘Union’ was in a bad way for want of its new machinery. Tell your brother-in-law to come here, Bill.”

Tarbox looked sheepishly pleased, and summoned Perry Purtett.

“Run down, Perry,” said Wade, “to the ‘Ambuster,’ and ask Captain Isaac to step up here a moment. Tell him I have some freight to send by him.”

Perry moved through the Foundry with his usual jaunty step, left his dignity at the door, and ran off to the dock.

The weather had grown fitful. Heavy clouds whirled over, trailing snow-flurries. Rarely the sun found a cleft in the black canopy to shoot a ray through and remind the world that he was still in his place and ready to shine when he was wanted.

Master Perry had a furlong to go before he reached the dock. He crossed the stream, kept unfrozen by the warm influences of the Foundry. He ran through a little dell hedged on each side by dull green cedars. It was severely cold now, and our young friend condescended to prance and jump over the ice-skimmed puddles to keep his blood in motion.

The little rusty, pudgy steamboat lay at the downstream side of the Foundry wharf. Her name was so long and her paddle-box so short, that the painter, beginning with ambitious large letters, had been compelled to abbreviate the last syllable. Her title read thus :—

### I. AMBUSTEr.

Certainly a formidable inscription for a steamboat !

When she hove in sight, Perry halted, resumed his stately demcanor, and embarked as if he were a Doge entering a Bucentaur to wed a Sea.

There was nobody on deck to witness the arrival and salute the *magnifico*.

Perry looked in at the Cap'n's office. He beheld a three-legged stool, a hacked desk, an inky steel pen, an inkless inkstand ; but no Cap'n Ambuster.

Perry inspected the Cap'n's state-room. There was a cracked looking-glass, into which he looked ; a hair-brush suspended by the glass, which he used ; a lair of blankets in a berth, which he had no present use for ; and a smell of musty boots, which nobody with a nose could help smelling. Still no Captain Ambuster, nor any of his crew.

Search in the unsavory kitchen revealed no cook, coiled up in a corner, suffering nightmares for the last greasy dinner he had brewed in his frying-pan. There were no deck hands bundled into their bunks. Perry rapped on the chain-box and inquired if anybody was within, and nobody answering, he had to ventriloquize a negative.

The engine-room, too, was vacant, and quite as unsavory as the other dens on board. Perry patronized the engine by a pull or two at the valves, and continued his tour of inspection.

The Ambuster's skiff, lying on her forward deck, seemed to entertain him vastly.

"Jolly!" says Perry. And so it was a jolly-boat in the literal, not the technical sense.

"The three wise men of Gotham went to sea in a bowl ; and here 's the identical craft," says Perry.

He gave the chubby little machine a push with his foot. It rolled and wallowed about grotesquely. When it was still again, it looked so comic, lying contentedly on its fat side like a pudgy baby, that Perry had a roar of laughter,

which, like other laughter to one's self, did not sound very merry, particularly as the north-wind was howling ominously, and the broken ice, on its downward way, was whispering and moaning and talking on in a most mysterious and inarticulate manner.

"Those sheets of ice would crunch up this skiff, as pigs do a punkin," thinks Perry.

And with this thought in his head he looked out on the river, and fancied the foolish little vessel cast loose and buffeting helplessly about in the ice.

He had been so busy until now, in prying about the steamboat and making up his mind that Captain and men had all gone off for a comfortable supper on shore, that his eyes had not wandered toward the stream.

Now his glance began to follow the course of the icy current. He wondered where all this supply of cakes came from, and how many of them would escape the stems of ferry-boats below and get safe to sea.

All at once, as he looked lazily along the lazy files of ice, his eyes caught a black object drifting on a fragment in a wide way of open water opposite Skerrett's Point, a mile distant.

Perry's heart stopped beating. He uttered a little gasping cry. He sprang ashore, not at all like a Doge quitting a Bucentaur. He tore back to the Foundry, dashing through the puddles, and, never stopping to pick up his cap, burst in upon Wade and Bill Tarbox in the office.

The boy was splashed from head to foot with red mud. His light hair, blown wildly about, made his ashy face seem paler. He stood panting.

His dumb terror brought back to Wade's mind all the bad omens of the morning.

"Speak!" said he, seizing Perry fiercely by the shoulder.

The uproar of the Works seemed to hush for an instant, while the lad stammered faintly, —

"There's somebody carried off in the ice by Skerrett's Point. It looks like a woman. And there's nobody to help."

## XII.

### IN THE ICE.

"HELP! help!" shouted the four trip-hammers, bursting in like a magnified echo of the boy's last word. "Help! help!" all the humming wheels and drums repeated more plaintively.

Wade made for the river.

This was the moment all his manhood had been training and saving for. For this he had kept sound and brave from his youth up.

As he ran, he felt that the only chance of instant help was in that queer little bowl-shaped skiff of the "Ambuster."

He had never been conscious that he had observed it; but the image had lain latent in his mind, biding its time. It might be ten, twenty precious moments before another boat could be found. This one was on the spot to do its duty at once.

"Somebody carried off, — perhaps a woman," Wade thought. "Not — No, she would not neglect my



warning! Whoever it is, we must save her from this dreadful death!"

He sprang on board the little steamboat. She was swaying uneasily at her moorings, as the ice crowded along and hammered against her stem. Wade stared from her deck down the river, with all his life at his eyes.

More than a mile away, below the hemlock-crested point, was the dark object Perry had seen, still stirring along the edges of the floating ice. A broad avenue of leaden-green water wrinkled by the cold wind separated the field where this figure was moving from the shore. Dark object and its footing of gray ice were drifting deliberately farther and farther away.

For one instant Wade thought that the terrible dread in his heart would paralyze him. But in that one moment, while his blood stopped flowing and his nerves failed, Bill Tarbox overtook him and was there by his side.

"I brought your cap," says Bill, "and our two coats."

Wade put on his cap mechanically. This little action calmed him.

"Bill," said he, "I'm afraid it is a woman, — a dear friend of mine, — a very dear friend."

Bill, a lover, understood the tone.

"We'll take care of her between us," he said.

The two turned at once to the little tub of a boat.

Oars? Yes, — slung under the thwarts, — a pair of short sculls, worn and split, but with work in them still. There they hung ready, — and a rusty boat-hook, besides.

"Find the thole-pins, Bill, while I cut a plug for her bottom out of this broomstick," Wade said.

This was done in a moment. Bill threw in the coats.

"Now, together!"

They lifted the skiff to the gangway. Wade jumped down on the ice and received her carefully. They ran her along, as far as they could go, and launched her in the sludge.

"Take the sculls, Bill. I'll work the boat-hook in the bow."

Nothing more was said. They thrust out with their crazy little craft into the thick of the ice-flood. Bill, amidships, dug with his sculls in among the huddled cakes. It was clumsy pulling. Now this oar and now that would be thrown out. He could never get a full stroke.

Wade in the bow could do better. He jammed the blocks aside with his boat-hook. He dragged the skiff forward. He steered through the little open ways of water.

Sometimes they came to a broad sheet of solid ice. Then it was, "Out with her, Bill!" and they were both out and sliding their bowl so quick over, that they had not time to go through the rotten surface. This was drowning business; but neither could be spared to drown yet.

In the leads of clear water, the oarsman got brave pulls and sent the boat on mightily. Then again in the thick porridge of brash ice they lost headway, or were baffled and stopped among the cakes. Slow work, slow and painful; and for many minutes they seemed to

gain nothing upon the steady flow of the merciless current.

A frail craft for such a voyage, this queer little half-pumpkin! A frail and leaky shell. She bent and cracked from stem to stern among the nipping masses. Water oozed in through her dry seams. Any moment a rougher touch or a sharper edge might cut her through. But that was a risk they had accepted. They did not take time to think of it, nor to listen to the crunching and crackling of the hungry ice around. They urged straight on, steadily, eagerly, coolly, spending and saving strength.

Not one moment to lose! The shattering of broad sheets of ice around them was a warning of what might happen to the frail support of their chase. One thrust of the boat-hook sometimes cleft a cake that to the eye seemed stout enough to bear a heavier weight than a woman's.

Not one moment to spare! The dark figure, now drifted far below the hemlocks of the Point, no longer stirred. It seemed to have sunk upon the ice, and to be resting there weary and helpless, on one side a wide way of lurid water, on the other half a mile of moving desolation.

Far to go, and no time to waste!

"Give way, Bill! Give way!"

"Ay, ay!"

Both spoke in low tones, hardly louder than the whisper of the ice around them.

By this time hundreds from the Foundry and the village were swarming upon the wharf and the steamboat.

"A hundred tar-barrels would n't git up my steam in time to do any good," says Cap'n Ambuster. "If them two in my skiff don't overhaul the man, he's gone."

"You're sure it's a man?" says Smith Wheelwright.

"Take a squint through my glass. I'm dreffully afeard it's a gal; but suthin' 's got into my eye, so I can't see."

Suthin' had got into the old fellow's eye, — suthin' saline and acrid, — namely, a tear.

"It's a woman," says Wheelwright, and suthin' of the same kind blinded him also.

Almost sunset now. But the air was suddenly filled with perplexing snow-dust from a heavy squall. A white curtain dropped between the anxious watchers on the wharf and the boatmen.

The same white curtain hid the dark floating object from its pursuers. There was nothing in sight to steer by, now.

Wade steered by his last glimpse, — by the current, — by the rush of the roaring wind, — by instinct.

How merciful that in such a moment a man is spared the agony of thought! His agony goes into action, intense as life.

It was bitterly cold. A swash of ice-water filled the bottom of the skiff. She was low enough down without that. They could not stop to bail, and the miniature icebergs they passed began to look significantly over the gunwale. Which would come to the point of foundering first, the boat or the little floe it aimed for?

Bitterly cold! The snow hardly melted upon Tarbox's bare hands. His fingers stiffened to the oars; but there

was life in them still, and still he did his work, and never turned to see how the steersman was doing his.

A flight of crows came sailing with the snow-squall. They alighted all about on the hummocks, and curiously watched the two men battling to save life. One black impish bird, more malignant or more sympathetic than his fellows, ventured to poise on the skiff's stern!

Bill hissed off this third passenger. The crow rose on its toes, let the boat slide away from under him, and followed croaking dismal good wishes.

The last sunbeams were now cutting in everywhere. The thick snow-flurry was like a luminous cloud. Suddenly it drew aside.

The industrious skiff had steered so well and made such headway, that there, a hundred yards away, safe still, not gone, thank God! was the woman they sought.

A dusky mass flung together on a waning rood of ice, — Wade could see nothing more.

Weary or benumbed, or sick with pure forlornness and despair, she had drooped down and showed no sign of life.

The great wind shook the river. Her waning rood of ice narrowed, foot by foot, like an unthrifty man's heritage. Inch by inch its edges wore away, until the little space that half sustained the dark heap was no bigger than a coffin-lid.

Help, now! — now, men, if you are to save! Thrust, Richard Wade, with your boat-hook! Pull, Bill, till your oars snap! Out with your last frenzies of vigor! For the little raft of ice, even that has crumbled beneath its burden, and she sinks, — sinks, with succor close at hand!

Sinks! No, — she rises and floats again.

She clasps something that holds her head just above water. But the unmannerly ice has buffeted her hat off. The fragments toss it about, — that pretty Amazonian hat, with its alert feather, all drooping and draggled. Her fair hair and pure forehead are uncovered for an astonished sunbeam to alight upon.

“It is my love, my life, Bill! Give way, once more!”

“Way enough! Steady! Sit where you are, Bill, and trim boat, while I lift her out. We cannot risk capsizing.”

He raised her carefully, tenderly, with his strong arms.

A bit of wood had buoyed her up for that last moment. It was a broken oar with a deep fresh gash in it.

Wade knew his mark, — the cut of his own skate-iron. This busy oar was still resolved to play its part in the drama.

The round little skiff just bore the third person without sinking.

Wade laid Mary Damer against the thwart. She would not let go her buoy. He unclasped her stiffened hands. This friendly touch found its way to her heart. She opened her eyes and knew him.

“The ice shall not carry off her hat to frighten some mother down stream,” says Bill Tarbox, catching it.

All these proceedings Cap’n Ambuster’s spy-glass announced to Dunderbunk.

“They ’re h’istin’ her up. They ’ve slumped her into the skiff. They ’re puttin’ for shore. Hooray!”

Pity a spy-glass cannot shoot cheers a mile and a half!

Perry Purtett instantly led a stampede of half Dunderbunk along the railroad-track to learn who it was and all about it.

All about it was, that Miss Damer was safe, and not dangerously frozen; and that Wade and Tarbox had carried her up the hill to her mother at Peter Skerrett's.

Missing the heroes in chief, Dunderbunk made a hero of Cap'n Ambuster's skiff. It was transported back on the shoulders of the crowd in triumphal procession. Perry Purtett carried round the hat for a contribution to new paint it, new rib it, new gunwale it, give it new sculls and a new boat-hook, — indeed, to make a new vessel of the brave little bowl.

"I 'm afeard," says Cap'n Ambuster, "that, when I git a harnsome new skiff, I shall want a harnsome new steamboat, and then the boat wiil go to cruisin' round for a harnsome new Cap'n."

And now for the end of this story.

Healthy love-stories always end in happy marriages.

So ends this story, begun as to its love portion by the little romance of a tumble, and continued by the bigger romance of a rescue.

Of course there were incidents enough to fill a volume, obstacles enough to fill a volume, and development of character enough to fill a tome thick as "Webster's Unabridged," before the happy end of the beginning of the Wade-Damer joint history.

But we can safely take for granted that, the lover being true and manly, and the lady true and womanly, and both possessed of the high moral qualities necessary

to artistic skating, they will go on understanding each other better, until they are as one as two can be.

Masculine reader, attend to the moral of this tale : —

Skate well, be a hero, bravely deserve the fair, prove your deserts by your deeds, find your “perfect woman nobly planned to warn, to comfort, and command,” catch her when found, and you are Blest.

Reader of the gentler sex, likewise attend : —

All the essential blessings of life accompany a true heart and a good complexion. Skate vigorously ; then your heart will beat true, your cheeks will bloom, your appointed lover will see your beautiful soul shining through your beautiful face, he will tell you so, and after sufficient circumlocution he will Pop, you will accept, and your lives will glide sweetly as skating on virgin ice to silver music.







## THE MAID OF MALINES.

BY E. BULWER LYTTON.

**I**T was noonday in the town of Malines, or Mechlin, as the English usually term it; the Sabbath bell had summoned the inhabitants to divine worship; and the crowd that had loitered round the church of St. Rembauld had gradually emptied itself within the spacious aisles of the sacred edifice.

A young man was standing in the street, with his eyes bent on the ground, and apparently listening for some sound; for, without raising his looks from the rude pavement, he turned to every corner of it with an intent and anxious expression of countenance; he held in one hand a staff, in the other a long slender cord, the end of which trailed on the ground; every now and then he called, with a plaintive voice, "Fido, Fido, come back! Why hast thou deserted me?" Fido returned not; the dog, wearied of confinement, had slipped from the string, and was at play with his kind in a distant quarter of the town, leaving the blind man to seek his way as he might to his solitary inn.

By and by a light step passed through the street and the young stranger's face brightened.

"Pardon me," said he, turning to the spot where his quick ear had caught the sound, "and direct me, if you are not by chance much pressed for a few moments' time, to the hotel *Mortier d'or*."

It was a young woman, whose dress betokened that she belonged to the middling classes of life, whom he thus addressed. "It is some distance hence, sir," said she, "but if you continue your way straight on for about a hundred yards, and then take the second turn to your right hand —"

"Alas!" interrupted the stranger, with a melancholy smile, "your direction will avail me little; my dog has deserted me, — and I am blind!"

There was something in these words, and in the stranger's voice, which went irresistibly to the heart of the young woman. "Pray forgive me," she said, almost with tears in her eyes, "I did not perceive your —" misfortune, she was about to say, but she checked herself with an instinctive delicacy. "Lean upon me, I will conduct you to the door; nay, sir," observing that he hesitated, "I have time enough to spare, I assure you."

The stranger placed his hand on the young woman's arm; and though Lucille was naturally so bashful that even her mother would laughingly reproach her for the excess of a maiden virtue, she felt not the least pang of shame, as she found herself thus suddenly walking through the streets of Malines, alone with a young stranger, whose dress and air betokened him of rank superior to her own.

"Your voice is very gentle," said he, after a pause;

"and that," he added, with a slight sigh, "is the criterion by which only I know the young and the beautiful." Lucille now blushed, and with a slight mixture of pain in the blush, for she knew well that to beauty she had no pretension. "Are you a native of this town?" he continued.

"Yes, sir, my father holds a small office in the customs, and my mother and I eke out his salary by making lace. We are called poor, but we do not feel it, sir."

"You are fortunate: there is no wealth like the heart's wealth, content," answered the blind man, mournfully.

"And monsieur," said Lucille, feeling angry with herself that she had awakened a natural envy in the stranger's mind, and anxious to change the subject, — "and monsieur, has he been long at Malines?"

"But yesterday. I am passing through the Low Countries on a tour; perhaps you smile at the tour of a blind man, but it is wearisome even to the blind to rest always in the same place. I thought during church time, when the streets were empty, that I might, by the help of my dog, enjoy safely at least the air, if not the sight of the town; but there are some persons, methinks, who cannot even have a dog for a friend."

The blind man spoke bitterly, — the desertion of his dog had touched him to the core. Lucille wiped her eyes. "And does monsieur travel then alone?" said she; and looking at his face more attentively than she had yet ventured to do, she saw that he was scarcely above two-and-twenty. "His father, his *mother*," she added, with an emphasis on the last word, "are they not with him?"

"I am an orphan," answered the stranger; "and I have neither brother nor sister."

The desolate condition of the blind man quite melted Lucille; never had she been so strongly affected. She felt a strange flutter at the heart, — a secret and earnest sympathy, that attracted her at once toward him. She wished that Heaven had suffered her to be his sister.

The contrast between the youth and the form of the stranger, and the affliction which took hope from the one and activity from the other, increased the compassion he excited. His features were remarkably regular, and had a certain nobleness in their outline; and his frame was gracefully and firmly knit, though he moved cautiously and with no cheerful step.

They had now passed into a narrow street leading toward the hotel, when they heard behind them the clatter of hoofs; and Lucille, looking hastily back, saw that a troop of the Belgian horse was passing through the town.

She drew her charge close by the wall, and, trembling with fear for him, she stationed herself by his side. The troop passed at a full trot through the street; and at the sound of their clanging arms, and at the ringing hoofs of their heavy chargers, Lucille might have seen, had she looked at the blind man's face, that its sad features kindled with enthusiasm, and his head was raised proudly from its wonted and melancholy bend. "Thank Heaven," she said, as the troop had nearly passed them, "the danger is over!" Not so. One of the last two soldiers who rode abreast was unfortunately mounted on a young and unmanageable horse. The rider's oaths and digging

spur only increased the fire and impatience of the charger; he plunged from side to side of the narrow street.

"*Gardez-vous*," cried the horseman, as he was borne on to the place where Lucille and the stranger stood against the wall; "are ye mad? — why do you not run?"

"For Heaven's sake, for mercy's sake, he is blind!" cried Lucille, clinging to the stranger's side.

"Save yourself, my kind guide!" said the stranger. But Lucille dreamt not of such desertion. The trooper wrested the horse's head from the spot where they stood; with a snort, as he felt the spur, the enraged animal lashed out with his hind legs; and Lucille, unable to save *both*, threw herself before the blind man, and received the shock directed against him; her slight and delicate arm fell shattered by her side: the horseman was borne onward. "Thank God, *you* are saved!" was poor Lucille's explanation; and she fell, overcome with pain and terror, into the arms which the stranger mechanically opened to receive her.

"My guide, my friend!" cried he, "you are hurt, you —"

"No, sir," interrupted Lucille, faintly, "I am better, — I am well. *This* arm, if you please: we are not far from your hotel now."

But the stranger's ear, tutored to every inflection of voice, told him at once of the pain she suffered; he drew from her by degrees the confession of the injury she had sustained; but the generous girl did not tell him that it had been incurred solely in his protection. He now insisted on reversing their duties, and accompanying *her* to her home; and Lucille, almost fainting with pain, and

hardly able to move, was forced to consent. But a few steps down the next turning stood the humble mansion of her father; they reached it; and Lucille scarcely crossed the threshold, before she sank down, and for some minutes was insensible to pain. It was left to the stranger to explain, and to beseech them immediately to send for a surgeon, — “the most skilful, the most practised in the town,” said he. “See, I am rich, and this is the least I can do to atone to your generous daughter for not forsaking even a stranger in peril.”

He held out his purse as he spoke, but the father refused the offer; and it saved the blind man some shame that he could not see the blush of honest resentment with which so poor a species of remuneration was put aside.

The young man stayed till the surgeon arrived, till the arm was set; nor did he depart until he had obtained a promise from the mother, that he should learn the next morning how the sufferer had passed the night.

The next morning, indeed, he had intended to quit a town that offers but little temptation to the traveller; but he tarried day after day, until Lucille herself accompanied her mother to assure him of her recovery.

You know, or at least I do, dearest Gertrude, that there *is* such a thing as love at the first meeting, — a secret, an unaccountable affinity between persons (strangers before) which draws them irresistibly together. If there were truth in Plato’s beautiful fantasy, that our souls were a portion of the stars, it might be that spirits, thus attracted to each other, have drawn their original light from the same orb; and they thus but yearn for a re-

newal of their former union. Yet without recurring to such ideal solutions of a daily mystery, it was but natural that one in the forlorn and desolate condition of Eugene St. Amand should have felt a certain tenderness for a person who had so generously suffered for his sake.

The darkness to which he was condemned did not shut from his mind's eye the haunting images of ideal beauty ; rather, on the contrary, in his perpetual and unoccupied solitude, he fed the reveries of an imagination naturally warm, and a heart eager for sympathy and communion.

He had said rightly that his only test of beauty was in the melody of voice ; and never had a softer or a more thrilling tone than that of the young maiden touched upon his ear. Her exclamation, so beautifully denying self, so devoted in its charity, "Thank God, *you* are saved !" uttered, too, in the moment of her own suffering, rang constantly upon his soul ; and he yielded, without precisely defining their nature, to vague and delicious sentiments, that his youth had never awakened to till then. And Lucille—the very accident that had happened to her on his behalf only deepened the interest she had already conceived for one who, in the first flush of youth, was thus cut off from the glad objects of life, and left to a night of years, desolate and alone. There is, to your beautiful and kindly sex, a perpetual and gushing *lovingness* to *protect*. This makes them the angels of sickness, the comforters of age, the fosterers of childhood ; and this feeling, in Lucille peculiarly developed, had already inexpressibly linked her compassionate nature to the lot of the unfortunate traveller. With ardent affections, and with thoughts beyond her

station and her years, she was not without that modest vanity which made her painfully susceptible to her own deficiencies in beauty. Instinctively conscious of how deeply she herself could love, she believed it impossible that she could ever be so loved in return. This stranger, so superior in her eyes to all she had yet seen, was the first out of her own household who had ever addressed her in that voice which by tones, not words, speaks that admiration most dear to a woman's heart. To *him* she was beautiful, and her lovely mind spoke out undimmed by the imperfections of her face. Not, indeed, that Lucille was wholly without personal attraction; her light step and graceful form were elastic with the freshness of youth; and her mouth and smile had so gentle and tender an expression, that there were moments when it would not have been the blind only who would have mistaken her to be beautiful. Her early childhood had indeed given the promise of attractions, which the small-pox, that then fearful malady, had inexorably marred. It had not only seared the smooth skin and the brilliant hues, but utterly changed even the characteristics of the features. It so happened that Lucille's family were celebrated for beauty, and vain of that celebrity; and so bitterly had her parents deplored the effects of the cruel malady, that poor Lucille had been early taught to consider them far more grievous than they really were, and to exaggerate the advantages of that beauty, the loss of which was considered by her parents so heavy a misfortune. Lucille, too, had a cousin named Julie, who was the wonder of all Malines for her personal perfections; and as the cousins were much together, the



contrast was too striking not to occasion frequent mortification to Lucille. But every misfortune has something of a counterpoise; and the consciousness of personal inferiority had meekened, without souring, her temper, had given gentleness to a spirit that otherwise might have been too high, and humility to a mind that was naturally strong, impassioned, and energetic.

And yet Lucille had long conquered the one disadvantage she most dreaded in the want of beauty. Lucille was never known but to be loved. Wherever came her presence, her bright and soft mind diffused a certain inexpressible charm; and where she was not, a something was missing from the scene which not even Julie's beauty could replace.

"I propose," said St. Amand to Madame le Tisseur, Lucille's mother, as he sat in her little *salon*, — for he had already contracted that acquaintance with the family which permitted him to be led to their house, to return the visits which Madame le Tisseur had made him, and his dog, once more returned a penitent to his master, always conducted his steps to the humble abode, and stopped instinctively at the door, — "I propose," said St. Amand, after a pause, and with some embarrassment, "to stay a little while longer at Malines; the air agrees with me, and I like the quiet of the place; but you are aware, Madame, that at a hotel among strangers I feel my situation somewhat cheerless. I have been thinking," — St. Amand paused again, — "I have been thinking that if I could persuade some agreeable family to receive me as a lodger, I would fix myself here for some weeks. I am easily pleased."

"Doubtless there are many in Malines who would be too happy to receive such a lodger."

"Will you receive me?" said St. Amand, abruptly. "It was of your family I thought."

"Of us? Monsieur is too flattering, but we have scarcely a room good enough for you."

"What difference between one room and another can there be to me? That is the best apartment, to my choice, in which the human voice sounds most kindly."

The arrangement was made, and St. Amand came now to reside beneath the same roof as Lucille. And was she not happy that *he* wanted so constant an attendance? Was she not happy that she was ever of use? St. Amand was passionately fond of music: he played himself with a skill that was only surpassed by the exquisite melody of his voice; and was not Lucille happy when she sat mute and listening to such sounds as at Malines were never heard before? Was she not happy in gazing on a face to whose melancholy aspect her voice instantly summoned the smile? Was she not happy when the music ceased and St. Amand called "Lucille"? Did not her own name uttered by that voice seem to her even sweeter than the music? Was she not happy when they walked out in the still evenings of summer, and her arm thrilled beneath the light touch of one to whom she was so necessary? Was she not proud in her happiness, and was there not something like worship in the gratitude she felt to him, for raising her humble spirit to the luxury of feeling herself loved?

St. Amand's parents were French; they had resided in the neighborhood of Amiens, where they had inherited

a competent property, to which he had succeeded about two years previous to the date of my story.

He had been blind from the age of three years. "I know not," said he, as he related these particulars to Lucille one evening when they were alone, — "I know not what the earth may be like, or the heaven, or the rivers whose voice at least I can hear, for I have no recollection beyond that of a confused but delicious blending of a thousand glorious colors, — a bright and quick sense of joy, — A VISIBLE MUSIC. But it is only since my childhood closed that I have mourned, as I now unceasingly mourn, for the light of day. My boyhood passed in a quiet cheerfulness; the least trifle then could please and occupy the vacancies of my mind; but it was as I took delight in being read to, as I listened to the vivid descriptions of poetry, as I glowed at the recital of great deeds, as I was made acquainted by books with the energy, the action, the heat, the fervor, the pomp, the enthusiasm of life, that I gradually opened to the sense of all I was forever denied. I felt that I existed, not lived; and that in the midst of the universal liberty, I was sentenced to a prison, from whose blank walls there was no escape. Still, however, while my parents lived, I had something of consolation; at least I was not alone. They died, and a sudden and dread solitude, a vast and empty dreariness, settled upon my dungeon. One old servant only, who had nursed me from my childhood, who had known me in my short privilege of light, by whose recollections my mind could grope back its way through the dark and narrow passages of memory to faint glimpses of the sun, was all that remained to

me of human sympathies. It did not suffice, however, to content me with a home where my father and my mother's kind voice were *not*. A restless impatience, an anxiety to move, possessed me, and I set out from my home, journeying whither I cared not, so that at least I could change an air that weighed upon me like a palpable burden. I took only this old attendant as my companion; he too died three months since at Bruxelles, worn out with years. Alas! I had forgotten that he was old, for I saw not his progress to decay; and now, save my faithless dog, I was utterly alone, till I came hither and found *thee*."

Lucille stooped down to caress the dog; she blest the desertion that had led to a friend who never could desert.

But, however much and however gratefully St. Amand loved Lucille, her power availed not to chase the melancholy from his brow, and to reconcile him to his forlorn condition.

"Ah, would that I could see thee! Would that I could look upon a face that my heart vainly endeavors to delineate."

"If thou couldst," sighed Lucille, "thou wouldst cease to love me."

"Impossible!" cried St. Amand, passionately; "however the world may find thee, *thou* wouldst become my standard of beauty, and I should judge not of thee by others, but of others by thee."

He loved to hear Lucille read to him, and mostly he loved the descriptions of war, of travel, of wild adventure, and yet they occasioned him the most pain. Often

she paused from the page as she heard him sigh, and felt that she would even have renounced the bliss of being loved by him, if she could have restored to him that blessing, the desire for which haunted him as a spectre.

Lucille's family were Catholic, and, like most in their station, they possessed the superstitions as well as the devotion of the faith. Sometimes they amused themselves of an evening by the various legends and imaginary miracles of their calendar; and once, as they were thus conversing with two or three of their neighbors, "The tomb of the three Kings of Cologne" became the main topic of their wandering recitals. However strong was the sense of Lucille, she was, as you will readily conceive, naturally influenced by the belief of those with whom she had been brought up from her cradle, and she listened to tale after tale of the miracles wrought at the consecrated tomb as earnestly and undoubtedly as the rest.

And the Kings of the East were no ordinary saints; to the relics of the Three Magi, who followed the Star of Bethlehem, and were the first potentates of the earth who adored its Saviour, well might the pious Catholic suppose that a peculiar power and a healing sanctity would belong. Each of the circle (St. Amand, who had been more than usually silent, and even gloomy during the day, had retired to his apartment, for there were some moments when, in the sadness of his thoughts, he sought that solitude which he so impatiently fled from at others), — each of the circle had some story to relate, equally veracious and indisputable, of an infirmity cured, or a prayer accorded, or a sin atoned for, at the

foot of the holy tomb. One story peculiarly affected Lucille; the narrator, a venerable old man with gray locks, solemnly declared himself a witness of its truth.

A woman at Anvers had given birth to a son, the offspring of an illicit connection, who came into the world deaf and dumb. The unfortunate mother believed the calamity a punishment for her own sin. "Ah! would," said she, "that the affliction had fallen only upon me! Wretch that I am, my innocent child is punished for my offence!" This idea haunted her night and day: she pined and could not be comforted. As the child grew up, and wound himself more and more round her heart, its caresses added new pangs to her remorse. And at length (continued the narrator), hearing perpetually of the holy fame of the tomb of Cologne, she resolved on a pilgrimage barefoot to the shrine. "God is merciful," said she, "and he who called Magdalene his sister, may take the mother's curse from the child." She then went to Cologne; she poured her tears, her penitence, and her prayers at the sacred tomb. When she returned to her native town, what was her dismay as she approached her cottage to behold it a heap of ruins! — its blackened rafters and yawning casements betokened the ravages of fire. The poor woman sunk upon the ground, utterly overpowered. Had her son perished? At that moment she heard the cry of a child's voice, and, lo, her child rushed to her arms and called her "Mother!"

He had been saved from the fire, which had broken out seven days before; but in the terror he had suffered, the string that tied his tongue had been loosened; he

had uttered articulate sounds of distress ; the curse was removed, and one word at least the kind neighbors had already taught him, to welcome his mother's return. What cared she now that her substance was gone, that her roof was ashes ? She bowed in grateful submission to so mild a stroke ; her prayer had been heard, and the sin of the mother was visited no longer upon the child.

I have said, dear Gertrude, that this story made a deep impression upon Lucille. A misfortune so nearly akin to that of St. Amand, removed by the prayer of another, filled her with devoted thoughts and a beautiful hope. "Is not the tomb still standing?" thought she ; "is not God still in heaven? — he who heard the guilty, may he not hear the guiltless? Is he not the God of love? Are not the affections the offerings that please him best? And what though the child's mediator was his mother, can even a mother love her child more tenderly than I love Eugene? But if, Lucille, thy prayer be granted, if he recover his sight, *thy* charm is gone, he will love thee no longer. No matter! be it so: I shall at least have made him happy!"

Such were the thoughts that filled the mind of Lucille; she cherished them till they settled into resolution, and she secretly vowed to perform her pilgrimage of love. She told neither St. Amand nor her parents of her intention; she knew the obstacles such an annunciation would create. Fortunately she had an aunt settled at Bruxelles, to whom she had been accustomed, once in every year, to pay a month's visit, and at that time she generally took with her the work of a twelvemonth's industry, which found a readier sale at Bruxelles than

Malines. Lucille and St. Amand were already betrothed; their wedding was shortly to take place; and the custom of the country leading parents, however poor, to nourish the honorable ambition of giving some dowry with their daughters, Lucille found it easy to hide the object of her departure, under the pretence of taking the lace to Bruxelles, which had been the year's labor of her mother and herself: it would sell for sufficient, at least, to defray the preparations for the wedding.

"Thou art ever right, child," said Madame le Tisseur; "the richer St. Amand is, why, the less oughtest thou to go a beggar to his house."

In fact, the honest ambition of the good people was excited; their pride had been hurt by the envy of the town and the current congratulations on so advantageous a marriage; and they employed themselves in counting up the fortune they should be able to give to their only child, and flattering their pardonable vanity with the notion that there would be no such great disproportion in the connection, after all. They were right, but not in their own view of the estimate; the wealth that Lucille brought was what fate could not lessen, — reverse could not reach, — the ungracious seasons could not blight its sweet harvest, — imprudence could not dissipate, — fraud could not steal one grain from its abundant coffers! Like the purse in the fairy tale, its use was hourly, its treasure inexhaustible.

St. Amand alone was not to be won to her departure; he chafed at the notion of a dowry; he was not appeased even by Lucille's representation, that it was only to gratify and not to impoverish her parents.



"And *thou*, too, canst leave me!" he said, in that plaintive voice which had made his first charm to Lucille's heart. "It is a second blindness."

"But for a few days; a fortnight at most, dearest Eugene."

"A fortnight! you do not reckon time as the blind do," said St. Amand, bitterly.

"But listen, listen, dear Eugene," said Lucille, weeping.

The sound of her sobs restored him to a sense of his ingratitude. Alas, he knew not how much he had to be grateful for. He held out his arms to her. "Forgive me," said he. "Those who can see nature know not how terrible it is to be alone."

"But my mother will not leave you."

"She is not you!"

"And Julie," said Lucille, hesitatingly.

"What is Julie to me?"

"Ah, you are the only one, save my parents, who could think of me in her presence."

"And why, Lucille?"

"Why! She is more beautiful than a dream."

"Say not so. Would I could see, that I might prove to the world how much more beautiful thou art. There is no music in *her* voice."

The evening before Lucille departed, she sat up late with St. Amand and her mother. They conversed on the future; they made plans; in the wild sterility of the world they laid out the garden of household love, and filled it with flowers, forgetful of the wind that scatters, and the frost that kills. And when, leaning on Lucille's arm, St. Amand sought his chamber, and they parted

at his door, which closed upon her, she fell down on her knees at the threshold, and poured out the fulness of her heart in a prayer for his safety, and the fulfilment of her timid hope.

At daybreak she was consigned to the conveyance that performed the short journey from Malines to Bruxelles. When she entered the town, instead of seeking her aunt, she rested at an auberge in the suburbs, and, confiding her little basket of lace to the care of its hostess, she set out alone, and on foot, upon the errand of her heart's lovely superstition. And, erring though it was, her faith redeemed its weakness: her affection made it even sacred. And well may we believe that the Eye which reads all secrets scarce looked reprovingly on that fanaticism whose only infirmity was love.

So fearful was she, lest, by rendering the task too easy, she might impair the effect, that she scarcely allowed herself rest or food. Sometimes in the heat of noon she wandered a little from the roadside, and under the spreading lime-tree surrendered her mind to its sweet and bitter thoughts; but ever the restlessness of her enterprise urged her on, and faint, weary, and with bleeding feet, she started up and continued her way. At length she reached the ancient city, where a holier age has scarce worn from the habits and aspects of men the Roman trace. She prostrated herself at the tomb of the Magi: she proffered her ardent but humble prayer to Him before whose Son those fleshless heads (yet to faith at least preserved) had, nearly eighteen centuries ago, bowed in adoration. Twice every day, for a whole week, she sought the same spot, and poured

forth the same prayer. The last day an old priest, who, hovering in the church, had observed her constantly at devotion, with that fatherly interest which the better ministers of the Catholic sect (that sect which has covered the earth with the mansions of charity) feel for the unhappy, approached her as she was retiring with moist and downcast eyes, and, saluting her, assumed the privilege of his order, to inquire if there was aught in which his advice or aid could serve. There was something in the venerable air of the old man which encouraged Lucille; she opened her heart to him; she told him all. The good priest was much moved by her simplicity and earnestness. He questioned her minutely as to the peculiar species of blindness with which St. Amand was afflicted; and after musing a little while, he said, "Daughter, God is great and merciful; we must trust in his power, but we must not forget that he mostly works by mortal agents. As you pass through Louvain in your way home, fail not to see there a certain physician, named Le Kain. He is celebrated through Flanders for the cures he has wrought among the blind, and his advice is sought by all classes from far and near. He lives hard by the Hôtel de Ville, but any one will inform you of his residence. Stay, my child, you shall take him a note from me; he is a benevolent and kind man, and you shall tell him exactly the same story (and with the same voice) you have told to me."

So saying, the priest made Lucille accompany him to his home, and, forcing her to refresh herself sparingly than she had yet done since she had left Malines, he gave her his blessing, and a letter to Le Kain, which

he rightly judged would insure her a patient hearing from the physician. Well known among all men of science was the name of the priest, and a word of recommendation from him went further, where virtue and wisdom were honored, than the longest letter from the haughtiest sieur in Flanders.

With a patient and hopeful spirit, the young pilgrim turned her back on the Roman Cologne, and now, about to rejoin St. Amand, she felt neither the heat of the sun nor the weariness of the road. It was one day at noon that she again passed through Louvain, and she soon found herself by the noble edifice of the Hôtel de Ville. Proud rose its Gothic spires against the sky, and the sun shone bright on its rich tracery and Gothic casements; the broad open street was crowded with persons of all classes, and it was with some modest alarm that Lucille lowered her veil and mingled with the throng. It was easy, as the priest had said, to find the house of Le Kain; she bade the servant take the priest's letter to his master, and she was not long kept waiting before she was admitted to the physician's presence. He was a spare, tall man, with a bald front, and a calm and friendly countenance. He was not less touched than the priest had been by the manner in which she narrated her story, described the affliction of her betrothed, and the hope that had inspired the pilgrimage she had just made.

"Well," said he, encouragingly, "we must see our patient. You can bring him hither to me."

"Ah, sir, I had hoped —" Lucille stopped suddenly.

"What, my young friend?"

"That I might have had the triumph of taking you to Malines. I know, sir, what you are about to say; and I know, sir, your time must be very valuable; but I am not so poor as I seem, and Eugene, that is Monsieur St. Amand, is very rich, and—and I have at Bruxelles what I am sure is a large sum; it was to have provided for the wedding, but it is most heartily at your service, sir."

Le Kain smiled; he was one of those men who love to read the human heart when its leaves are fair and undefiled; and, in the benevolence of science, he would have gone a longer journey than from Louvain to Malines to give sight to the blind, even had St. Amand been a beggar.

"Well, well," said he, "but you forget that Monsieur St. Amand is not the only one in the world who wants me. I must look at my note-book, and see if I can be spared for a day or two."

So saying, he glanced at his memoranda; everything smiled on Lucille: he had no engagements that his partner could not fulfil, for some days; he consented to accompany Lucille to Malines.

Meanwhile cheerless and dull had passed the time to St. Amand; he was perpetually asking Madame le Tisseur what hour it was; it was almost his only question. There seemed to him no sun in the heavens, no freshness in the air, and he even forbore his favorite music; the instrument had lost its sweetness since Lucille was not by to listen.

It was natural that the gossips of Malines should feel some envy at the marriage Lucille was about to make

with one whose competence report had exaggerated into prodigal wealth, whose birth had been elevated from the respectable to the noble, and whose handsome person was clothed, by the interest excited by his misfortune, with the beauty of Antinous. Even that misfortune, which ought to have levelled all distinctions, was not sufficient to check the general envy; perhaps to some of the dames of Malines blindness in a husband was indeed not the least agreeable of all qualifications! But there was one in whom this envy rankled with a peculiar sting; it was the beautiful, the all-conquering Julie. That the humble, the neglected Lucille should be preferred to her; that Lucille, whose existence was well-nigh forgot beside Julie's, should thus become suddenly of importance; that there should be one person in the world, and that person young, rich, handsome, to whom she was less than nothing, when weighed in the balance with Lucille, mortified to the quick a vanity that had never till then received a wound. "It is well," she would say, with a bitter jest, "that Lucille's lover is blind. To be the one it is necessary to be the other!"

During Lucille's absence she had been constantly in Madame le Tisseur's house; indeed, Lucille had prayed her to be so. She had sought, with an industry that astonished herself, to supply Lucille's place, and, among the strange contradictions of human nature, she had learned, during her efforts to please, to love the object of those efforts, — as much at least as she was capable of loving.

She conceived a positive hatred to Lucille; she persisted in imagining that nothing but the accident of first

acquaintance had deprived her of a conquest with which she persuaded herself her happiness had become connected. Had St. Amand never loved Lucille, and proposed to Julie, his misfortune would have made her reject him, despite his wealth and his youth; but to be Lucille's lover, and a conquest to be won from Lucille, raised him instantly to an importance not his own. Safe, however, in his affliction, the arts and beauty of Julie fell harmless on the fidelity of St. Amand. Nay, he liked her less than ever, for it seemed an impertinence in any one to counterfeit the anxiety and watchfulness of Lucille.

"It is time, surely it is time, Madame le Tisseur, that Lucille should return. She might have sold all the lace in Malines by this time," said St. Amand one day, peevishly.

"Patience, my dear friend, patience; perhaps she may return to-morrow."

"To-morrow! let me see, it is only six o'clock; only six, you are sure?"

"Just five, dear Eugene; shall I read to you? This is a new book from Paris; it has made a great noise," said Julie.

"You are very kind, but I will not trouble you."

"It is anything but trouble."

"In a word, then, I would rather not."

"O that he could see," thought Julie; "would I not punish him for this!"

"I hear carriage-wheels; who can be passing this way? Surely it is the voiturier from Bruxelles," said St. Amand, starting up; "it is his day, his hour, too. No,

no, it is a lighter vehicle." And he sank down listlessly on his seat.

Nearer and nearer rolled the wheels; they turned the corner; they stopped at the lowly door; and — overcome — overjoyed, Lucille was clasped to the bosom of St. Amand.

"Stay," said she, blushing, as she recovered her self-possession, and turned to Le Kain, "pray pardon me, sir. Dear Eugene, I have brought with me one who, by God's blessing, may yet restore you to sight."

"We must not be sanguine, my child," said Le Kain; "anything is better than disappointment."

To close this part of my story, dear Gertrude, Le Kain examined St. Amand, and the result of the examination was a confident belief in the probability of a cure. St. Amand gladly consented to the experiment of an operation; it succeeded; the blind man saw! O, what were Lucille's feelings, what her emotion, what her joy, when she found the object of her pilgrimage — of her prayers — fulfilled! That joy was so intense, that in the eternal alternations of human life she might have foretold from its excess how bitter the sorrows fated to ensue.

As soon as by degrees the patient's new sense became reconciled to the light, his first, his only demand was for Lucille. "No, let me not see her alone, let me see her in the midst of you all, that I may convince you that the heart never is mistaken in its instincts." With a fearful, a sinking presentiment, Lucille yielded to the request to which the impetuous St. Amand would hear, indeed, no denial. The father, the mother, Julie, Lucille, Julie's



younger sisters, assembled in the little parlor; the door opened, and St. Amand stood hesitating on the threshold. One look around sufficed to him; his face brightened, he uttered a cry of joy. "Lucille! Lucille!" he exclaimed, "it is you, I know it, *you* only!" He sprang forward and fell at the feet of Julie!

Flushed, elated, triumphant, Julie bent upon him her sparkling eyes; *she* did not undeceive him.

"You are wrong, you mistake," said Madame le Tisseur, in confusion; "that is her cousin Julie, this is your Lucille."

St. Amand rose, turned, saw Lucille, and at that moment she wished herself in her grave. Surprise, mortification, disappointment, almost dismay, were depicted in his gaze. He had been haunting his prison-house with dreams, and, now set free, he felt how unlike they were to the truth. Too new to observation to read the woe, the despair, the lapse and shrinking of the whole frame, that his look occasioned Lucille, he yet felt, when the first shock of his surprise was over, that it was not thus he should thank her who had restored him to sight. He hastened to redeem his error; ah! how could it be redeemed?

From that hour all Lucille's happiness was at an end; her fairy palace was shattered in the dust; the magician's wand was broken up; the Ariel was given to the winds; and the bright enchantment no longer distinguished the land she lived in from the rest of the barren world. It was true that St. Amand's words were kind; it is true that he remembered with the deepest gratitude all she had done in his behalf; it is true that he forced

himself again and again to say, "She is my betrothed, — my benefactress!" and he cursed himself to think that the feelings he had entertained for her were fled. Where was the passion of his words? Where the ardor of his tone? Where that play and light of countenance which her step, *her* voice, could formerly call forth? When they were alone he was embarrassed and constrained, and almost cold; his hand no longer sought hers; his soul no longer missed her if she was absent a moment from his side. When in their household circle, he seemed visibly more at ease; but did his eyes fasten upon her who had opened them to the day? Did they not wander at every interval with a too eloquent admiration to the blushing and radiant face of the exulting Julie? This was not, you will believe, suddenly perceptible in one day or one week, but every day it was perceptible more and more. Yet still — bewitched, insnared, as St. Amand was — he never perhaps would have been guilty of an infidelity that he strove with the keenest remorse to wrestle against, had it not been for the fatal contrast, at the first moment of his gushing enthusiasm, which Julie had presented to Lucille; but for that he would have formed no previous idea of real and living beauty to aid the disappointment of his imaginings and his dreams. He would have seen Lucille young and graceful, and with eyes beaming affection, contrasted only by the wrinkled countenance and bended frame of her parents, and she would have completed her conquest over him before he had discovered that she was less beautiful than others; nay, more, that infidelity never could have lasted above the first few days, if the vain

and heartless object of it had not exerted every art, all the power and witchery of her beauty, to cement and continue it. The unfortunate Lucille — so susceptible to the slightest change in those she loved, so diffident of herself, so proud too in that diffidence; no longer necessary, no longer missed, no longer loved — could not bear to endure the galling comparison of the past and present. She fled uncomplainingly to her chamber to indulge her tears, and thus, unhappily, absent as her father generally was during the day, and busied as her mother was either at work or in household matters, she left Julie a thousand opportunities to complete the power she had begun to wield over — no, not the heart! — the *senses* of St. Amand! Yet still not suspecting, in the open generosity of her mind, the whole extent of her affliction, poor Lucille buoyed herself at times with the hope that when once married, when once in that intimacy of friendship, the unspeakable love she felt for him could disclose itself with less restraint than at present, — she should perhaps regain a heart which had been so devotedly hers, that she could not think that without a fault it was irrevocably gone; on that hope she anchored all the little happiness that remained to her. And still St. Amand pressed their marriage, but in what different tones! In fact, he wished to preclude from himself the possibility of a deeper ingratitude than that which he had incurred already. He vainly thought that the broken reed of love might be bound up and strengthened by the ties of duty; and at least he was anxious that his hand, his fortune, his esteem, his gratitude, should give to Lucille the only recompense it was now in his power to

bestow. Meanwhile, left alone so often with Julie, and Julie bent on achieving the last triumph over his heart, St. Amand was gradually preparing a far different reward, a far different return for her to whom he owed so incalculable a debt.

There was a garden behind the house, in which there was a small arbor, where often in the summer evenings Eugene and Lucille had sat together, — hours never to return! One day she heard from her own chamber, where she sat mourning, the sound of St. Amand's flute swelling gently from that beloved and consecrated bower. She wept as she heard it, and the memories that the music bore softening and endearing his image, she began to reproach herself that she had yielded so often to the impulse of her wounded feelings; that, chilled by *his* coldness, she had left him so often to himself, and had not sufficiently dared to tell him of that affection which, in her modest self-depreciation, constituted her only pretension to his love. "Perhaps he is alone now," she thought; "the tune too is one which he knew that I loved." And with her heart on her step, she stole from the house and sought the arbor. She had scarce turned from her chamber when the flute ceased; as she neared the arbor she heard voices, — Julie's voice in grief, St. Amand's in consolation. A dread foreboding seized her; her feet clung rooted to the earth.

"Yes, marry her — forget me," said Julie; "in a few days you will be another's, and I, I — forgive me, Eugene, forgive me that I have disturbed your happiness. I am punished sufficiently; my heart will break, but it will break loving you —" Sobs choked Julie's voice.

“O, speak not thus!” said St. Amand. “I — *I* only am to blame; I false to both, to both ungrateful. O, from the hour that these eyes opened upon you I drank in a new life; the sun itself to me was less wonderful than your beauty! But — but — let me forget that hour. What do I not owe to Lucille? I shall be wretched — I shall deserve to be so; for shall I not think, Julie, that I have imbittered your life with our ill-fated love? But all that I can give — my hand — my home — my plighted faith — must be hers. Nay, Julie, nay, — why that look? Could I act otherwise? Can I dream otherwise? Whatever the sacrifice, *must* I not render it? Ah, what do I owe to Lucille, were it only for the thought that but for her I might never have seen thee!”

Lucille stayed to hear no more; with the same soft step as that which had borne her within hearing of these fatal words, she turned back once more to her desolate chamber.

That evening, as St. Amand was sitting alone in his apartment, he heard a gentle knock at the door. “Come in,” he said, and Lucille entered. He started in some confusion, and would have taken her hand, but she gently repulsed him. She took a seat opposite to him, and, looking down, thus addressed him: —

“My dear Eugene, that is, Monsieur St. Amand, I have something on my mind that I think it better to speak at once; and if I do not exactly express what I would wish to say, you must not be offended at Lucille; it is not an easy matter to put into words what one feels deeply.” Coloring and suspecting something of the truth, St. Amand would have broken in upon her here;

but she, with a gentle impatience, waved him to be silent, and continued : —

“ You know that when you once loved me, I used to tell you that you would cease to do so, could you see how undeserving I was of your attachment. I did not deceive myself, Eugene ; I always felt assured that such would be the case, that your love for me necessarily rested on your affliction : but, for all that, I never at least had a dream or a desire, but for your happiness ; and God knows, that if again, by walking barefooted, not to Cologne, but to Rome — to the end of the world, I could save you from a much less misfortune than that of blindness, I would cheerfully do it ; yes, even though I might foretell all the while that, on my return, you would speak to me coldly, think of me lightly, and that the penalty to me would — would be — what it has been.” Here Lucille wiped a few natural tears from her eyes ; St. Amand, struck to the heart, covered his face with his hands, without the courage to interrupt her. Lucille continued : —

“ That which I foresaw has come to pass ; I am no longer to you what I once was, when you could clothe this poor form and this homely face with a beauty they did not possess ; you would wed me still, it is true ; but I am proud, Eugene, and cannot stoop to gratitude where I once had love. I am not so unjust as to blame you ; the change was natural, was inevitable. I should have steeled myself more against it ; but I am now resigned ; we must part ; you love Julie, — that too is natural, — and *she* loves you ; ah ! what also more probable in the course of events ? Julie loves you not yet,

perhaps, so much as I did, but then she has not known you as I have, and she, whose whole life has been triumph, cannot feel the gratitude I felt at fancying myself loved ; but this will come ; God grant it ! Farewell, then, forever, dear Eugene ; I leave you, when you no longer want me ; you are now independent of Lucille ; wherever you go, a thousand hereafter can supply my place ; — farewell ! ”

She rose, as she said this, to leave the room ; but St. Amand, seizing her hand, which she in vain endeavored to withdraw from his clasp, poured forth incoherently, passionately, his reproaches on himself, his eloquent persuasions against her resolution.

“ I confess,” said he, “ that I have been allured for a moment ; I confess that Julie’s beauty made me less sensible to your stronger, your holier, O, far, far holier title to my love ! But forgive me, dearest Lucille ; already I return to you, to all I once felt for you ; make me not curse the blessing of sight that I owe to you. You must not leave me ; never can we two part ; try me, only try me, and if ever, hereafter, my heart wanders from you, *then*, Lucille, leave me to my remorse.”

Even at that moment Lucille did not yield ; she felt that his prayer was but the enthusiasm of the hour ; she felt that there was a virtue in her pride ; that to leave him was a duty to herself. In vain he pleaded ; in vain were his embraces, his prayers ; in vain he reminded her of her plighted troth, of her aged parents, whose happiness had become wrapped in her union with him. “ How, even were it as you wrongly believe, how in honor to them can I desert you, can I wed another ? ”

“Trust that, trust all to me,” answered Lucille; “your honor shall be my care, none shall blame *you*; only do not let your marriage with Julie be celebrated here before their eyes; that is all I ask, all they can expect. God bless you! Do not fancy I shall be unhappy, for whatever happiness the world gives you, shall I not have contributed to bestow it? — and with that thought I am above compassion.”

She glided from his arms, and left him to a solitude more bitter even than that of blindness; that very night Lucille sought her mother; to her she confided all. I pass over the reasons she urged, the arguments she overcame; she conquered rather than convinced, and, leaving to Madame le Tisseur the painful task of breaking to her father her unalterable resolution, she quitted Malines the next morning, and, with a heart too honest to be utterly without comfort, paid that visit to her aunt which had been so long deferred.

The pride of Lucille’s parents prevented them from reproaching St. Amand. He did not bear, however, their cold and altered looks; he left their house; and though for several days he would not even see Julie, yet her beauty and her art gradually resumed their empire over him. They were married at Courtrai, and, to the joy of the vain Julie, departed to the gay metropolis of France. But before their departure, before his marriage, St. Amand endeavored to appease his conscience by purchasing for Monsieur le Tisseur a much more lucrative and honorable office than that he now held. Rightly judging that Malines could no longer be a pleasant residence for them, and much less for Lucille,



the duties of the post were to be fulfilled in another town; and, knowing that Monsieur le Tisseur's delicacy would revolt at receiving such a favor from his hands, he kept the nature of his negotiation a close secret, and suffered the honest citizen to believe that his own merits alone had entitled him to so unexpected a promotion.

Time went on. This quiet and simple history of humble affections took its date in a stormy epoch of the world, — the dawning revolution of France. The family of Lucille had been little more than a year settled in their new residence when Dumouriez led his army into the Netherlands. But how, meanwhile, had that year passed for Lucille? I have said that her spirit was naturally high; that, though so tender, she was not weak; her very pilgrimage to Cologne alone, and at the timid age of seventeen, proved that there was a strength in her nature no less than a devotion in her love. The sacrifice she had made brought its own reward. She believed St. Amand was happy, and she would not give way to the selfishness of grief; she had still duties to perform; she would still comfort her parents, and cheer their age; she could still be all the world to them; she felt this and was consoled. Only once during the year had she heard of Julie; she had been seen by a mutual friend at Paris, gay, brilliant, courted, and admired; of St. Amand she heard nothing.

My tale, dear Gertrude, does not lead me through the harsh scenes of war. I do not tell you of the slaughter and the siege, and the blood that inundated those fair lands, the great battle-field of Europe. The people of the Netherlands in general were with the cause of Dumouriez, but the town in which Le Tisseur dwelt offered

some slight resistance to his arms. Le Tisseur himself, despite his age, girded on his sword; the town was carried, and the fierce and licentious troops of the conqueror poured, flushed with their easy victory, through its streets. Le Tisseur's house was filled with drunken and rude troopers; Lucille herself trembled in the fierce gripe of one of those dissolute soldiers, more bandit than soldier, whom the subtle Dumouriez had united to his army, and by whose blood he so often saved that of his nobler band; her shrieks, her cries, were vain, when suddenly the reeking troopers gave way; "The captain! brave captain!" was shouted forth; the insolent soldier, felled by a powerful arm, sank senseless at the feet of Lucille; and a glorious form, towering above its fellows, even through its glittering garb, even in that dreadful hour, remembered at a glance by Lucille, stood at her side; her protector — her guardian! — thus once more she beheld St. Amand!

The house was cleared in an instant, the door barred. Shouts, groans, wild snatches of exulting song, the clang of arms, the tramp of horses, the hurrying footsteps, the deep music, sounded loud and blended terribly without; Lucille heard them not, — she was on that breast which never should have deserted her.

Effectually to protect his friends, St. Amand took up his quarters at their house; and for two days he was once more under the same roof as Lucille. He never recurred voluntarily to Julie; he answered Lucille's timid inquiry after her health briefly, and with coldness; but he spoke with all the enthusiasm of a long-pent and ardent spirit of the new profession he had embraced.

Glory seemed now to be his only mistress, and the vivid delusion of the first bright dreams of the revolution filled his mind, broke from his tongue, and lighted up those dark eyes which Lucille had redeemed to day.

She saw him depart at the head of his troop ; she saw his proud crest glancing in the sun ; she saw his steed winding through the narrow street ; she saw that his last glance reverted to her, where she stood at the door ; and as he waved his adieu, she fancied that there was on his face that look of deep and grateful tenderness which reminded her of the one bright epoch of her life.

She was right ; St. Amand had long since in bitterness repented of a transient infatuation, had long since discovered the true Florimel from the false, and felt that in Julie Lucille's wrongs were avenged. But in the hurry and heat of war he plunged that regret—the keenest of all—which embodies the bitter words “**TOO LATE !**”

Years passed away, and in the resumed tranquillity of Lucille's life, the brilliant apparition of St. Amand appeared as something dreamt of, not seen. The star of Napoleon had risen above the horizon ; the romance of his early career had commenced ; and the campaign of Egypt had been the herald of those brilliant and meteoric successes which flashed forth from the gloom of the revolution of France.

You are aware, dear Gertrude, how many in the French as well as the English troops returned home from Egypt blinded with the ophthalmia of that arid soil. Some of the young men in Lucille's town, who had joined Napoleon's army, came back darkened by that

fearful affliction, and Lucille's alms, and Lucille's aid, and Lucille's sweet voice were ever at hand for those poor sufferers, whose common misfortune touched so thrilling a chord of her heart.

Her father was now dead, and she had only her mother to cheer amid the ills of age. As one evening they sat at work together, Madame le Tisseur said, after a pause, —

“I wish, dear Lucille, thou couldst be persuaded to marry Justin; he loves thee well, and now that thou art yet young, and hast many years before thee, thou shouldst remember that when I die thou wilt be alone.”

“Ah, cease, dearest mother, I never can marry now; and as for love, — once taught in the bitter school in which I have learned the knowledge of myself, — I cannot be deceived again.”

“My Lucille, you do not know yourself; never was woman loved, if Justin does not love you; and never did lover feel with more real warmth how worthily he loved.”

And this was true; and not of Justin alone, for Lucille's modest virtues, her kindly temper, and a certain undulating and feminine grace, which accompanied all her movements, had secured her as many conquests as if she had been beautiful. She had rejected all offers of marriage with a shudder, without even the throb of a flattered vanity: One memory, sadder, was also dearer to her than all things; and something sacred in its recollections made her deem it even a crime to think of effacing the past by a new affection.

“I believe,” continued Madame le Tisseur, angrily, “that thou still thinkest fondly of him from whom only in the world thou couldst have experienced ingratitude.”

"Nay, mother," said Lucille with a blush and a slight sigh, "Eugene is married to another."

While thus conversing, they heard a gentle and timid knock at the door, — the latch was lifted. "This," said the rough voice of a commissaire of the town, — "this, monsieur, is the house of *Madame le Tisseur* and — *voilà mademoiselle!*" A tall figure, with a shade over his eyes, and wrapped in a long military cloak, stood in the room. A thrill shot across Lucille's heart. He stretched out his arms. "Lucille," said that melancholy voice, which had made the music of her first youth, "where art thou, Lucille? alas! she does not recognize St. Amand."

Thus was it, indeed. By a singular fatality, the burning suns and the sharp dust of the plains of Egypt had smitten the young soldier, in the flush of his career, with a second — and this time with an irremediable — blindness! He had returned to France to find his hearth lonely: Julie was no more, — a sudden fever had cut her off in the midst of youth; and he had sought his way to Lucille's house, to see if one hope yet remained to him in the world!

And when, days afterward, humbly and sadly he re-urged a former suit, did Lucille shut her heart to its prayer? Did her pride remember its wound, — did she revert to its desertion, — did she say to the whisper of her yearning love, "Thou hast been before forsaken"? That voice and those darkened eyes pleaded to her with a pathos not to be resisted. "I am once more necessary to him," was all her thought; "if I reject him, who will tend him?" In that thought was the motive of her conduct; in that thought gushed back upon her soul all

the springs of checked, but unconquered, unconquerable love! In that thought she stood beside him at the altar, and pledged, with a yet holier devotion than she might have felt of yore, the vow of her imperishable truth.

And Lucille found, in the future, a reward which the common world could never comprehend. With his blindness returned all the feelings she had first awakened in St. Amand's solitary heart; again he yearned for her step, — again he missed even a moment's absence from his side, — again her voice chased the shadow from his brow, — and in her presence was a sense of shelter and of sunshine. He no longer sighed for the blessing he had lost; he reconciled himself to fate, and entered into that serenity of mood which mostly characterizes the blind. Perhaps, after we have seen the actual world, and experienced its hollow pleasures, we can resign ourselves the better to its exclusion; and as the cloister which repels the ardor of our hope is sweet to our remembrance, so the darkness loses its terror when experience has wearied us with the glare and travail of the day. It was something, too, as they advanced in life, to feel the chains that bound him to Lucille strengthening daily, and to cherish in his overflowing heart the sweetness of increasing gratitude; it was something that he could not see years wrinkle that open brow, or dim the tenderness of that touching smile; it was something that to him she was beyond the reach of time, and preserved to the verge of a grave (which received them both within a few days of each other), in all the bloom of her unwithering affection, in all the freshness of a heart that never could grow old!



## THE STORY OF RUTH.

**I**T came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, — he and his wife and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other was Ruth. And they dwelled there about ten years.

And Mahlon and Chilion died also, both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab; for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them.

And they lifted up their voice and wept; and they said unto her, "Surely, we will return with thee unto thy people."

And Naomi said, "Turn again, my daughters; why will ye go with me? Turn again, my daughters, go your way."

And they lifted up their voice and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

And she said, "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people and unto her gods! Return thou after thy sister-in-law."

And Ruth said, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee. For whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

When Naomi saw that Ruth was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. So they two went until they came to Bethlehem.

And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, "Is this Naomi?"



And she said unto them, "Call me not Naomi [pleasant], call me Mara [bitter]; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing that the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab; and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley-harvest.

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz.

And Ruth said unto Naomi: "Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace."

And Naomi said unto her, "Go, my daughter."

And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, "The Lord be with you!"

And they answered him, "The Lord bless thee!"

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, "Whose damsel is this?"

And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, "It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. And she said, 'I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came, and hath

continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house."

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, "Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens; let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn."

Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?"

And Boaz answered and said unto her, "It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law, since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

Then she said, "Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens."

And Boaz said unto her at meal-time, "Come thou hither, and eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar."

And she sat beside the reapers, and he reached her parched corn; and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not; and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them that she may glean them, and rebuke her not."

So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned, and she brought forth and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

And her mother-in-law said unto her, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day, and where wroughtest thou? Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee!"

And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, "The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz."

And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. The man is near of kin unto us; one of our next kinsmen."

And Ruth the Moabitess said, "He said unto me also, 'Thou shalt keep fast by my young men until they have ended all my harvest.'"

And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field."

So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley-harvest and of wheat-harvest, and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, "My

daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself, therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor; but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie; and thou shalt go in and uncover his feet and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do."

And Ruth said unto her, "All that thou sayest unto me I will do." And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.

And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn. And she came softly and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself; and behold! a woman lay at his feet. And he said, "Who art thou?"

And she answered, "I am Ruth, thine handmaid. Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman."

And he said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter; for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than in the beginning; inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true

that I am thy near kinsman ; howbeit, there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be, in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well ; let him do the kinsman's part ; but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth. Lie down until the morning."

And she lay at his feet until the morning. And she rose up before one could know another.

And he said, " Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor." Also he said, " Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee and hold it."

And when she held it he measured six measures of barley and laid it on her.

And she went into the city, and when she came to her mother-in-law she said, " Who art thou, my daughter ? "

And she told her all that the man had done to her ; and she said, " These six measures of barley gave he me ; for he said to me, ' Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.' "

Then Naomi said, " Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall ; for the man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day."

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there. And, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by, unto whom he said, " Ho, such a one ! turn aside, sit down here."

And he turned aside, and sat down.

And Boaz took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, " Sit ye down here."

And they sat down.

And he said unto the kinsman, "Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land which was our brother Elimelech's; and I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is none to redeem it beside thee, and I am after thee."

And he said, "I will redeem it."

Then said Boaz, "What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance."

And the kinsman said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance. Redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it."

Now this was the manner in former time in Israel, concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things: a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor; and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, —

"Buy it for thee." So he drew off his shoe.

And Boaz said unto the elders and unto all the people, "Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, at the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day."

And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said : “ We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel ; and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem ; and let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.”

So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife.

And Ruth bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi, “ Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age ; for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.”

And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women, her neighbors, gave it a name, saying, “ There is a son born to Naomi ” ; and they called his name Obed.





## THE RISE OF ISKANDER.

BY BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

### I.

**T**HE sun had set behind the mountains, and the rich plain of Athens was suffused with the violet glow of a Grecian eve. A light breeze rose, the olive groves awoke from their noonday trance, and rustled with returning animation, and the pennons of the Turkish squadron, that lay at anchor in the harbor of Piræus, twinkled in the lively air. From one gate of the city the women came forth in procession to the fountain; from another, a band of sumptuous horsemen sallied out, and threw their wanton javelins in the invigorating sky, as they galloped over the plain. The voice of birds, the buzz of beauteous insects, the breath of beauteous flowers, the quivering note of the nightingale, the pittering call of the grasshopper, and the perfume of the violet shrinking from the embrace of the twilight breeze, filled the purple air with music and odor.

A solitary being stood upon the towering crag of the Acropolis, amid the ruins of the temple of Minerva, and gazed upon the inspiring scene. Around him rose the



matchless memorials of antique art; immortal columns whose symmetry baffles modern proportion, serene caryatides bearing with greater grace a graceful burden, carvings of delicate precision, and friezes breathing with heroic life. Apparently the stranger, though habited as a Moslem, was not insensible to the genius of the locality, nor indeed would his form and countenance have misbecome a contemporary of Pericles and Phidias. In the prime of life, and far above the common stature, but with a frame the muscular power of which was even exceeded by its almost ideal symmetry, his high white forehead, his straight profile, his oval countenance, and his curling lip exhibited the same visage that had inspired the sculptor of the surrounding demigods.

The dress of the stranger, although gorgeous, was, however, certainly not classic. A crimson shawl was wound round his head, and glittered with a trembling aigrette of diamonds. His vest, which sat tight to his form, was of green velvet, richly embroidered with gold and pearls. Over this he wore a very light jacket of crimson velvet, equally embroidered, and lined with sable. He wore also the full white camese common among the Albanians; and while his feet were protected by sandals, the lower part of his legs was guarded by greaves of embroidered green velvet. From a broad belt of scarlet leather peeped forth the jewelled hilts of a variety of daggers, and by his side was an enormous cimeter, in a scabbard of chased silver.

The stranger gazed upon the wide prospect before him with an air of pensive abstraction. "Beautiful Greece," he exclaimed, "thou art still my country. A mournful

lot is mine, a strange and mournful lot, yet not uncheered by hope. I am at least a warrior, and this arm, though trained to war against thee, will not well forget, in the quick hour of battle, the blood that flows within it. Themistocles saved Greece and died a satrap; I am bred one: let me reverse our lots, and die at least a patriot."

At this moment the evening hymn to the Virgin arose from a neighboring convent. The stranger started as the sacred melody floated towards him, and, taking a small golden cross from his heart, he kissed it with devotion, and then, descending the steep of the citadel, entered the city.

He proceeded along the narrow winding streets of Athens until he at length arrived in front of a marble palace, in the construction of which the architect had certainly not consulted the surrounding models which time had spared to him, but which, however it might have offended a classic taste, presented altogether a magnificent appearance. Half a dozen guards, whose shields and helmets somewhat oddly contrasted with two pieces of cannon, one of which was ostentatiously placed on each side of the portal, and which had been presented to the Prince of Athens by the republic of Venice, lounging before the entrance, paid their military homage to the stranger as he passed them. He passed them and entered a large quadrangular garden, surrounded by arcades, supported by a considerable number of thin, low pillars, of barbarous workmanship and various-colored marbles. In the midst of the garden rose a fountain, whence the bubbling waters flowed in artificial channels through

vistas of orange and lemon trees. By the side of the fountain, on a luxurious couch, his eyes fixed upon a richly illuminated volume, reposed Nicæus, the youthful Prince of Athens.

“Ah! is it you?” said the prince, looking up with a smile, as the stranger advanced. “You have arrived just in time to remind me that we must do something more than read the *Persæ*, — we must act it.”

“My dear Nicæus,” replied the stranger, “I have arrived only to bid you farewell.”

“Farewell!” exclaimed the prince in a tone of surprise and sorrow, and he rose from the couch. “Why, what is this?”

“It is too true,” said the stranger, and he led the way down one of the walks. “Events have occurred which entirely baffle all our plans and prospects, and place me in a position as difficult as it is harrowing. Hunniades has suddenly crossed the Danube in great force, and carried everything before him. I am ordered to proceed to Albania instantly, and to repair to the camp at the head of the Epirots.”

“Indeed!” said Nicæus with a thoughtful air. “My letters did not prepare me for this. ’Tis sudden. Is Amurath himself in the field?”

“No; Karen Bey commands. I have accounted for my delay to the sultan by pretended difficulties in our treaty, and have held out the prospect of a large tribute.”

“When we are plotting that that tribute should be paid no longer!” added Nicæus with a smile.

“Alas! my dear friend,” replied the Turkish com-

mander, "my situation has now become critical. Hitherto my services for the Moslemin have been confined to acting against nations of their own faith. I am now suddenly summoned to combat against my secret creed, and the best allies of what I must yet call my secret country. The movement, it appears to me, must be made now or never, and I cannot conceal from myself that it never could have been prosecuted under less auspicious circumstances."

"What, you desponding!" exclaimed Nicæus, "then I must despair. Your sanguine temper has alone supported me throughout all our dangerous hopes."

"And Æschylus?" said the stranger, smiling.

"And Æschylus, certainly," replied Nicæus; "but I have lived to find even Æschylus insipid. I pant for action."

"It may be nearer than we can foresee," replied the stranger. "There is a God who fashions all things. He will not desert a righteous cause. He knoweth that my thoughts are as pure as my situation is difficult. I have some dim ideas still brooding in my mind, but we will not discuss them now. I must away, dear prince. The breeze serves fairly. Have you ever seen Hunniades?"

"I was educated at the court of Transylvania," replied Nicæus, looking down with a somewhat embarrassed air. "He is a famous knight, Christendom's chief bulwark."

The Turkish commander sighed. "When we meet again," he said, "may we meet with brighter hopes and more buoyant spirits. At present I must, indeed, say farewell."

The prince turned with a dejected countenance, and pressed his companion to his heart. "'T is a sad end," said he, "to all our happy hours and lofty plans."

"You are as yet too young to quarrel with Fortune," replied the stranger, "and, for myself, I have not yet settled my accounts with her. However, for the present, farewell, dear Nicæus!"

"Farewell," replied the Prince of Athens,— "farewell, dear Iskander!"

## II.

ISKANDER was the youngest son of the Prince of Epirus, who, with the other Grecian princes, had, at the commencement of the reign of Amurath the Second, in vain resisted the progress of the Turkish arms in Europe. The Prince of Epirus had obtained peace by yielding his four sons as hostages to the Turkish sovereign, who engaged that they should be educated in all the accomplishments of their rank, and with a due deference to their faith. On the death of the Prince of Epirus, however, Amurath could not resist the opportunity that then offered itself of adding to his empire the rich principality he had long coveted. A Turkish force instantly marched into Epirus, and seized upon Croia, the capital city, and the children of its late ruler were doomed to death. The beauty, talents, and valor of the youngest son saved him, however, from the fate of his poisoned brothers. Iskander was educated at Adrianople, in the Moslemin faith; and as he, at a very early age, excelled in feats of arms all the Moslemin warriors,

he became a prime favorite of the sultan, and speedily rose in his service to the highest rank.

At this period the irresistible progress of the Turkish arms was the subject of alarm throughout all Christendom.

Constantinople, then the capital of the Greek empire, had already been more than once besieged by the predecessors of Amurath, and had only been preserved by fortunate accidents and humiliating terms. The despots of Bosnia, Servia, and Bulgaria, and the Grecian princes of Ætolia, Macedon, Epirus, Athens, Phocis, Bœotia, and indeed of all the regions to the straits of Corinth, were tributaries to Amurath, and the rest of Europe was only preserved from his grasp by the valor of the Hungarians and the Poles, whom a fortunate alliance had now united under the sovereignty of Uladislaus, who, incited by the pious eloquence of the Cardinal of St. Angelo, the legate of the pope, and yielding to the tears and supplications of the despot of Servia, had, at the time our story opens, quitted Buda, at the head of an immense army, crossed the Danube, and joining his valiant viceroy, the famous John Hunniades, vaivode of Transylvania, defeated the Turks with great slaughter, relieved all Bulgaria, and pushed on to the base of Mount Hæmus, known in modern times as the celebrated Balkan. Here the Turkish general, Karam Bey, awaited the Christians, and hither to his assistance was Iskander commanded to repair at the head of a body of janisaries, who had accompanied him to Greece, and the tributary Epirots.

Had Iskander been influenced by vulgar ambition, his

loftiest desires might have been fully gratified by the career which Amurath projected for him. The Turkish sultan destined for the Grecian prince the hand of one of his daughters, and the principal command of his armies. He lavished upon him the highest dignities and boundless wealth ; and, whether it arose from a feeling of remorse, or of affection for a warrior whose unexampled valor and unrivalled skill had already added some of the finest provinces of Asia to his rule, it is certain that Iskander might have exercised over Amurath a far greater degree of influence than was enjoyed by any other of his courtiers. But the heart of Iskander responded with no sympathy to these flattering favors. His Turkish education could never eradicate from his memory the consciousness that he was a Greek ; and although he was brought up in the Moslemin faith, he had, at an early period of his career, secretly recurred to the creed of his Christian fathers. He beheld in Amurath the murderer of his dearest kinsmen, and the oppressor of his country ; and although a certain calmness of temper and coolness of judgment, which very early developed themselves in his character, prevented him from ever giving any indication of his secret feelings, Iskander had long meditated on the exalted duty of freeing his country.

Despatched to Greece, to arrange the tributes and the treaties of the Grecian princes, Iskander became acquainted with the young Nicæus ; and their acquaintance soon matured into friendship. Nicæus was inexperienced ; but nature had not intended him for action. The young Prince of Athens would loll by the side of a

fountain, and dream of the wonders of old days. Surrounded by his eunuchs, his priests, and his courtiers, he envied Leonidas, and would have emulated Themistocles. He was passionately devoted to the ancient literature of his country, and had the good taste, rare at that time, to prefer Demosthenes and Lysias to Chrysostom and Gregory, and the choruses of the Grecian theatre to the hymns of the Greek Church. The sustained energy and noble simplicity of the character of Iskander seemed to recall to the young prince the classic heroes over whom he was so often musing, while the enthusiasm and fancy of Nicæus, and all that apparent weakness of will, and those quick vicissitudes of emotion to which men of a fine susceptibility are subject, equally engaged the sympathy of the more vigorous and constant and experienced mind of his companion.

To Nicæus, Iskander had, for the first time in his life, confided much of his secret heart; and the young prince fired at the inspiring tale. Often they consulted over the fortunes of their country, and, excited by their mutual invention, at length even dared to hope that they might effect its deliverance, when Iskander was summoned to the army. It was a mournful parting. Both of them felt that the last few months of their lives had owed many charms to their companionship. The parting of friends, united by sympathetic tastes, is always painful; and friends, unless their sympathy subsist, had much better never meet. Iskander stepped into the ship, sorrowful, but serene. Nicæus returned to his palace moody and fretful; lost his temper with his courtiers, and, when he was alone, even shed tears.



## III.

THREE weeks had elapsed since the parting of Iskander and Nicæus, when the former, at the head of ten thousand men, entered, by a circuitous route, the defiles of Mount Hæmus and approached the Turkish camp, which had been pitched upon a vast and elevated table-ground, commanded on all sides by superior heights, which, however, were fortified and well garrisoned by janissaries. The Epirots halted, and immediately prepared to raise their tents, while their commander, attended by a few of his officers, instantly proceeded to the pavilion of Karam Bey.

The arrival of Iskander diffused great joy among the soldiery; and as he passed through the encampment, the exclamations of the Turkish warriors announced how ready they were to be led to the charge by a chieftain who had been ever successful. A guard of honor, by the orders of Karam Bey, advanced to conduct Iskander to his presence; and soon, entering the pavilion, the Grecian prince exchanged courtesies with the Turkish general. After the formal compliments had passed, Karam Bey waved his hand, and the pavilion was cleared, with the exception of Mousa, the chief secretary and favorite of Karam. "You have arrived in good time, Iskander, to assist in the destruction of the Christian dogs," said the bey. "Flushed with their accursed success, they have advanced too far. Twice they have endeavored to penetrate the mountains; and each time they have been forced to retire with great loss. The passages are well barricadoed with timber and huge frag-

ments of rock. The dogs have lost all heart, and are sinking under the joint sufferings of hunger and cold. Our scouts tell me they exhibit symptoms of retreat. We must rush down from the mountains and annihilate them."

"Is Hunniades here in person?" inquired Iskander.

"He is here," replied Karam, "in person; the dog of dogs! Come, Iskander, his head would be a fine Ramadan present to Amurath. 'Tis a head worth three tails, I guess."

Mousa, the chief secretary, indulged in some suppressed laughter at this joke. Iskander smiled.

"If they retreat we must assuredly attack them," observed Iskander, musingly. "I have a persuasion that Hunniades and myself will soon meet."

"If there be truth in the prophet!" exclaimed Karam, "I have no doubt of it. Hunniades is reserved for you, bey. We shall hold up our heads at court yet, Iskander. You have had letters lately?"

"Some slight words."

"No mention of us, of course?"

"Nothing, except some passing praise of your valor and discretion."

"We do our best, we do our best. Will Isa Bey have Ætolia, think you?"

"I have no thoughts. Our royal father will not forget his children, and Isa Bey is a most valiant chieftain."

"You heard not that he was coming here?" inquired Karam.

"Have you?" responded the cautious Iskander.

"A rumor, a rumor," replied Karam. "He is at Adrianople, think you?"

"It may be so; I am, you know, from Athens."

"True, true. We shall beat them, Iskander, we shall beat them."

"For myself I feel sanguine," replied the prince, and he arose to retire. "I must at present to my men. We must ascertain more accurately the movements of the Christians before we decide on our own. I am inclined myself to reconnoitre them. How far may it be?"

"There is not room to form our array between them and the mountains," replied Karam.

"'Tis well. Success attend the true believers! By to-morrow's dawn we shall know more."

#### IV.

ISKANDER returned to his men. Night was coming on. Fires and lights blazed and sparkled in every direction. The air was clear but very cold. He entered his tent, and, muffling himself up in his pelisse of sables, he mounted his horse, and, declining any attendance, rode for some little distance, until he had escaped from the precincts of the camp. Then he turned his horse towards one of the wildest passes of the mountain, and, galloping at great speed, never stopped until he had gained a considerable ascent. The track became steep and rugged. The masses of loose stone rendered his progress slow; but his Anatolian charger still bore him at intervals bravely, and in three hours' time he had gained the summit of Mount Hæmus. A brilliant moon flooded the broad plains of Bulgaria with shadowy light. At the

base of the mountainous range the red watch-fires denoted the situation of the Christian camp.

Iskander proceeded down the descent with an audacious rapidity; but his charger was thorough-bred, and his moments were golden. Ere midnight he had reached the outposts of the enemy, and was challenged by a sentinel.

“Who goes there?”

“A friend to Christendom.”

“The word?”

“I have it not; nay, calmly. I am alone, but I am not unarmed. I do not know the word. I come from a far country, and bear important tidings to the great Hunniades; conduct me to that chief.”

“May I be crucified if I will,” responded the sentinel, “before I know who and what you are. Come, keep off, unless you wish to try the effect of a Polish lance,” continued the sentinel; “’t is something, I assure you, not less awkward than your Greek fire, if Greek indeed you be.”

“My friend, you are a fool,” said Iskander, “but time is too precious to argue any longer.” So saying, the Turkish commander dismounted, and, taking up the brawny sentinel in his arms with the greatest ease, threw him over his shoulder, and, threatening the astounded soldier with instant death if he struggled, covered him with his pelisse and entered the camp.

They approached a watch-fire, around which several soldiers were warming themselves.

“Who goes there?” inquired a second sentinel.

“A friend to Christendom,” answered Iskander.

“The word?”

Iskander hesitated.

"The word, or I'll let fly," said the sentinel, elevating his cross-bow.

"The Bridge of Buda," instantly replied the terrified prisoner beneath the pelisse of Iskander.

"Why did not you answer before, then?" said one of the guards.

"And why do you mock us by changing your voice?" said another. "Come, get on with you, and no more jokes."

Iskander proceeded through a street of tents, in some of which were lights, but all of which were silent. At length he met the esquire of a Polish knight returning from a convivial meeting not a little elevated.

"Who are you?" inquired Iskander.

"I am an esquire," replied the gentleman.

"A shrewd man, I doubt not, who would make his fortune," replied Iskander. "You must know great things have happened. Being on guard I have taken a prisoner who has deep secrets to divulge to the Lord Hunniades. Thither to his pavilion I am now bearing him. But he is a stout barbarian, and almost too much for me. Assist me in carrying him to the pavilion of Hunniades, and you shall have all the reward and half the fame."

"You are a very civil-spoken young gentleman," said the esquire. "I think I know your voice. Your name, if I mistake not, is Leckinski?"

"A relative. We had a common ancestor."

"I thought so. I know the Leckinskies ever by their voice. I am free to help you on the terms you mention;

all the reward and half the fame. 'Tis a strong barbarian, is it? We cannot cut its throat, or it will not divulge. All the reward and half the fame! I will be a knight to-morrow. It seems a sort of fish, and has a smell."

The esquire seized the shoulders of the prisoner, who would have spoken had he not been terrified by the threats of Iskander, who, carrying the legs of the sentinel, allowed the Polish gentleman to lead the way to the pavilion of Hunniades. Thither they soon arrived; and Iskander, dropping his burden, and leaving the prisoner without to the charge of his assistant, entered the pavilion of the general of the Hungarians.

He was stopped in a small outer apartment by an officer, who inquired his purpose, and to whom he repeated his desire to see the Hungarian leader, without loss of time, on important business. The officer hesitated; but, summoning several guards, left Iskander in their custody, and, stepping behind a curtain, disappeared. Iskander heard voices, but could distinguish no words. Soon the officer returned, and, ordering the guards to disarm and search Iskander, directed the Grecian prince to follow him. Drawing aside the curtain, Iskander and his attendant entered a low apartment of considerable size. It was hung with skins. A variety of armor and dresses were piled on couches. A middle-aged man of majestic appearance, muffled up in a pelisse of furs, with long chestnut hair, and a cap of crimson velvet and ermine, was walking up and down the apartment, and dictating some instructions to a person who was kneeling on the ground and writing by the bright flame of a brazen lamp.

The bright flame of the brazen lamp fell full upon the face of the secretary. Iskander beheld a most beautiful woman.

She looked up as Iskander entered. Her large dark eyes glanced through his soul. Her raven hair descended to her shoulders in many curls on each side of her face, and was braided with strings of immense pearls. A broad cap of white fox-skin crowned her whiter forehead. Her features were very small, but sharply moulded, and a delicate tint gave animation to her clear fair cheek. She looked up, as Iskander entered, with an air rather of curiosity than of embarrassment.

Hunniades stopped and examined his visitor with a searching inquisition. "Whence come you?" inquired the Hungarian chieftain.

"From the Turkish camp," was the answer.

"An envoy, or a deserter?"

"Neither."

"What then?"

"A convert."

"Your name?"

"Lord Hunniades," said Iskander, "that is for your private ear. I am unarmed, and were I otherwise the first knight of Christendom can scarcely fear. I am one in birth and rank your equal; if not in fame, at least, I trust, in honor. My time is all-precious; I can scarcely stay here while my horse breathes. Dismiss your attendant."

Hunniades darted a glance at his visitor which would have baffled a weaker brain, but Iskander stood the scrutiny calm and undisturbed. "Go, Stanislaus," said

the vaivode to the officer. "This lady, sir," continued the chieftain, "is my daughter, and one from whom I have no secrets."

Iskander bowed lowly as the officer disappeared.

"And now," said Hunniades, "to business. Your purpose?"

"I am a Grecian prince, and a compulsory ally of the Moslemin. In a word, my purpose here is to arrange a plan by which we may effect at the same time your triumph and my freedom."

"To whom then have I the honor of speaking?" inquired Hunniades.

"My name, great Hunniades, is perhaps not altogether unknown to you: they call me Iskander."

"What, the right arm of Amurath, the conqueror of Caramania, the flower of Turkish chivalry? Do I indeed behold that matchless warrior?" exclaimed Hunniades; and he held forth his hand to his guest, and, ungirding his own sword, offered it to the prince. "Iduna," continued Hunniades, to his daughter, "you at length behold Iskander."

"My joy is great, sir," replied Iduna, "if I indeed rightly understand that we may count the Prince Iskander a champion of the cross."

Iskander took from his heart his golden crucifix, and kissed it before her. "This has been my companion and consolation for long years, lady," said Iskander; "you, perhaps, know my mournful history, Hunniades. Hitherto, my pretended sovereign has not required me to bare my cimeter against my Christian brethren. That hour, however, has at length arrived, and it has decided me to



adopt a line of conduct long meditated. Karam Bey, who is aware of your necessities, the moment you commence your retreat, will attack you. I shall command his left wing. In spite of his superior power and position, draw up in array, and meet him with confidence. I propose, at a convenient moment in the day, to withdraw my troops, and, with the Epirots, hasten to my native country, and at once raise the standard of independence. It is a bold measure, but success is the child of audacity. We must assist each other with mutual diversions. Single-handed it is in vain for me to commence a struggle, which, with all adventitious advantages, will require the utmost exertion of energy, skill, and patience. But if yourself and the King Uladislaus occupy the armies of Amurath in Bulgaria, I am not without hope of ultimate success, since I have to inspire me all the most urgent interests of humanity, and combat, at the same time, for my God, my country, and my lawful crown."

"Brave prince, I pledge you my troth," said Hunniades, coming forward, and seizing his hand; "and while Iskander and Hunniades live, they will never cease until they have achieved their great and holy end."

"It is a solemn compact," said Iskander, "more sacred than if registered by the scribes of Christendom. Lady Iduna, your prayers!"

"They are ever with the champions of the cross," replied the daughter of Hunniades. She rose; the large cloak in which she was enveloped fell from her exquisite form. "Noble Iskander, this rosary is from the holy sepulchre," continued Iduna; "wear it for the sake and memory of that blessed Saviour, who died for our sins."

Iskander held forth his arm and touched her delicate hand as he received the rosary, which, pressing to his lips, he placed round his neck.

“Great Hunniades,” said the Grecian prince, “I must cross the mountains before dawn. Let me venture to entreat that we should hear to-morrow that the Christian camp is in retreat.”

“Let it be even so,” said the Hungarian, after some thought, “and may to-morrow’s sun bring brighter days to Christendom.” And with these words terminated the brief and extraordinary visit of Iskander to the Christian general.

## V.

THE intelligence of the breaking up of the Christian camp, and the retreat of the Christian army, soon reached the divan of Karam Bey, who immediately summoned Iskander to consult on the necessary operations. The chieftains agreed that instant pursuit was indispensable, and soon the savage Hæmus poured forth from its green bosom swarms of that light cavalry which was perhaps even a more fatal arm of the Turkish power than the famous janissaries themselves. They hovered on the rear of the retreating Christians, charged the wavering, captured the unwary. It was impossible to resist their sudden and impetuous movements, which rendered their escape as secure as their onset was overwhelming. Wearied at length by the repeated assaults, Hunniades, who, attended by some chosen knights, had himself repaired to the rear, gave orders for the army to halt and offer battle.

Their pursuers instantly withdrew to a distance, and, gradually forming into two divisions, awaited the arrival of the advancing army of the Turks. The Moslemin came forward in fierce array, and with the sanguine courage inspired by expected triumph. Very conspicuous, was Iskander, bounding in his crimson vest upon his ebon steed, and waving his gleaming cimeter.

The janissaries charged, calling upon Allah with an awful shout. The Christian knights, invoking the Christian saints, received the Turks at the point of their lances. But many a noble lance was shivered that morn, and many a bold rider and worthy steed bit the dust of that field, borne down by the irresistible numbers of their fierce adversaries. Everywhere the balls and the arrows whistled through the air, and sometimes an isolated shriek, heard amid the general clang, announced another victim to the fell and mysterious agency of the Greek fire.

Hunniades, while he performed all the feats of an approved warrior, watched with anxiety the disposition of the Turkish troops. Hitherto, from the nature of their position, but a portion of both armies had interfered in the contest, and as yet Iskander had kept aloof. But now, as the battle each instant raged with more fury, and it was evident that ere long the main force of both armies must be brought into collision, Hunniades, with a terrible suspense, watched whether the Grecian prince were willing or even capable of executing his plan. Without this fulfilment, the Christian hero could not conceal from himself that the day must be decided against the cross.

In the mean time Iskander marked the course of events with not less eagerness than Hunniades. Already Karam Bey had more than once summoned him to bring the Epirots into action. He assented; but an hour passed away without changing his position. At length, more from astonishment than rage, the Turkish commander sent his chief secretary Mousa himself to impress his wishes upon his colleague, and obtain some explanation of his views and conduct. Mousa found Iskander surrounded by some of the principal Epirot nobles, all mounted on horseback, and standing calmly under a wide-spreading plane-tree. The chief secretary of Karam Bey was too skilful a courtier to permit his countenance to express his feelings, and he delivered himself of his mission rather as if he had come to request advice, than to communicate a reprimand.

"Your master is a wise man, Mousa," replied Iskander; "but even Karam Bey may be mistaken. He deems that a battle is not to be won by loitering under a shadowy tree. Now I differ with him, and I even mean to win this day by such a piece of truancy. However, it may certainly now be time for more active work. You smile encouragement, good Mousa. Giorgio, Demetrius, to your duty!"

At these words, two stout Epirots advanced to the unfortunate secretary, seized and bound him, and placed him on horseback before one of their comrades.

"Now all who love their country follow me!" exclaimed Iskander. So saying, and at the head of five thousand horsemen, Iskander quitted the field at a rapid pace.

## VI.

WITH incredible celerity Iskander and his cavalry dashed over the plains of Roumelia, and never halted except for short and hurried intervals of rest and repose, until they had entered the mountainous borders of Epirus, and were within fifty miles of its capital, Croia. On the eve of entering the kingdom of his fathers, Iskander ordered his guards to produce the chief secretary of Karam Bey. Exhausted with fatigue, vexation, and terror, the disconsolate Mousa was led forward.

“Cheer up, worthy Mousa!” said Iskander, lying his length on the green turf. “We have had a sharp ride; but I doubt not we shall soon find ourselves, by the blessing of God, in good quarters. There is a city at hand which they call Croia, in which once, as the rumor runs, the son of my father should not have had to go seek for an entrance. No matter. Methinks, worthy Mousa, thou art the only man in our society that can sign thy name. Come, now, write me an order signed Karam Bey to the governor of this said city, for its delivery up to the valiant champion of the crescent, Iskander, and thou shalt ride in future at a pace more suitable to a secretary.”

The worthy Mousa humbled himself to the ground, and then, taking his writing materials from his girdle, inscribed the desired order, and delivered it to Iskander, who, glancing at the inscription, pushed it into his vest.

“I shall proceed at once to Croia, with a few friends,” said Iskander; “do you, my bold companions, follow me this eve in various parties, and by various routes. At

dead of the second night, collect in silence before the gates of Croia !”

Thus speaking, Iskander called for his now refreshed charger, and, accompanied by two hundred horsemen, bade farewell for a brief period to his troops, and soon, having crossed the mountains, descended into the fertile plains of Epirus.

When the sun rose in the morning, Iskander and his friends beheld at the farther end of the plain a very fine city shining in the light. It was surrounded with lofty turreted walls flanked by square towers, and was built upon a gentle eminence, which gave it a very majestic appearance. Behind it rose a lofty range of purple mountains of very picturesque form, and the highest peaks capped with snow. A noble lake, from which troops of wild fowl occasionally rose, expanded like a sheet of silver on one side of the city. The green breast of the contiguous hills sparkled with white houses.

“Behold Croia !” exclaimed Iskander. “Our old fathers could choose a site, comrades. We shall see whether they expend their time and treasure for strangers, or their own seed.” So saying, he spurred his horse, and with panting hearts and smiling faces, Iskander and his company had soon arrived in the vicinity of the city.

The city was surrounded by a beautiful region of corn-fields and fruit-trees. The road was arched with the overhanging boughs. The birds chirped on every spray. It was a blithe and merry morn. Iskander plucked a bunch of olives as he cantered along. “Dear friends,” he said, looking round with an inspiring smile, “let us gather our first harvest !” And, thereupon, each putting

forth his rapid hand, seized, as he rushed by, the emblem of possession, and, following the example of his leader, placed it in his cap.

They arrived at the gates of the city, which was strongly garrisoned; and Iskander, followed by his train, galloped up the height of the citadel. Alighting from his horse, he was ushered into the divan of the governor, an ancient pasha, who received the conqueror of Caramania with all the respect that became so illustrious a companion of the crescent. After the usual forms of ceremonious hospitality, Iskander, with a courteous air, presented him the order for delivering up the citadel; and the old pasha, resigning himself to the loss of his post with Oriental submission, instantly delivered the keys of the citadel and town to Iskander, and requested permission immediately to quit the late scene of his command.

Quitting the citadel, Iskander now proceeded through the whole town, and in the afternoon reviewed the Turkish garrison in the great square. As the late governor was very anxious to quit Croia that very day, Iskander insisted on a considerable portion of the garrison accompanying him as a guard of honor, and returning the next morning. The rest he divided in several quarters, and placed the gates in charge of his own companions.

At midnight the Epirots, faithful to their orders, arrived and united beneath the walls of the city, and after interchanging the signals agreed upon, the gates were opened. A large body instantly marched and secured the citadel. The rest, conducted by appointed leaders, surrounded the Turks in their quarters. And suddenly, in the noon of night, in that great city, arose

a clang so dreadful that people leaped up from their sleep and stared with stupor. Instantly the terrace of every house blazed with torches, and it became as light as day. Troops of armed men were charging down the streets brandishing their cimeters and yataghans, and exclaiming, "The Cross, the Cross!" — "Liberty!" — "Greece!" — "Iskander and Epirus!" The townsmen recognized their countrymen by their language and their dress. The name of Iskander acted as a spell. They stopped not to inquire. A magic sympathy at once persuaded them that this great man had, by the grace of Heaven, recurred to the creed and country of his fathers. And so every townsman, seizing the nearest weapon, with a spirit of patriotic frenzy, rushed into the streets, crying out, "The Cross, the Cross! Liberty! Greece! Iskander and Epirus!" Ay! even the women lost all womanly fears, and stimulated instead of soothed the impulse of their masters. They fetched them arms, they held the torches, they sent them forth with vows and prayers and imprecations, their children clinging to their robes, and repeating with enthusiasm phrases which they could not comprehend.

The Turks fought with the desperation of men who feel that they are betrayed, and must be victims. The small and isolated bodies were soon massacred, and with cold steel, for at this time, although some of the terrible inventions of modern warfare were introduced, their use was not general. The citadel, indeed, was fortified with cannon; but the greater part of the soldiery trusted to their crooked swords and their unerring javelins. The main force of the Turkish garrison had been quartered



in an old palace of the archbishop, situated in the middle of the city on a slightly rising and open ground, a massy building of rustic stone. Here the Turks, although surrounded, defended themselves desperately, using their cross-bows with terrible effect; and hither, the rest of the city being now secured, Iskander himself repaired to achieve its complete deliverance.

The Greeks had endeavored to carry the principal entrance of the palace by main force, but the strength of the portal had resisted their utmost exertions, and the arrows of the besieged had at length forced them to retire to a distance. Iskander directed that two pieces of cannon should be dragged down from the citadel, and then played against the entrance. In the mean time, he ordered immense piles of damp fagots to be lit before the building, the smoke of which prevented the besieged from taking any aim. The ardor of the people was so great that the cannon were soon served against the palace, and their effects were speedily remarked. The massy portal shook; a few blows of the battering-ram, and it fell. The Turks sallied forth, were received with a shower of Greek fire, and driven in with agonizing yells. Some endeavored to escape from the windows, and were speared or cut down; some appeared wringing their hands in despair upon the terraced roof. Suddenly the palace was announced to be on fire. A tall white bluish flame darted up from a cloud of smoke, and soon, as if by magic, the whole back of the building was encompassed with rising tongues of red and raging light. Amid a Babel of shrieks, and shouts, and cheers, and prayers, and curses, the roof of the palace fell in with a

crash, which produced amid the besiegers an awful and momentary silence, but in an instant they started from their strange inactivity, and, rushing forward, leaped into the smoking ruins, and at the same time completed the massacre and achieved their freedom.

## VII.

AT break of dawn Iskander sent couriers throughout all Epirus, announcing the fall of Croia, and that he had raised the standard of independence in his ancient country. He also despatched a trusty messenger to Prince Nicæus, at Athens, and to the great Hunniades. The people were so excited throughout all Epirus at this great and unthought-of intelligence, that they simultaneously rose in all the open country, and massacred the Turks, and the towns were only restrained in a forced submission to Amurath, by the strong garrisons of the sultan.

Now Iskander was very anxious to effect the removal of these garrisons without loss of time, in order that if Amurath sent a great power against him, as he expected, the invading army might have nothing to rely upon but its own force, and that his attention might not in any way be diverted from effecting their overthrow. Therefore, as soon as his troops had rested, and he had formed his new recruits into some order, which, with their willing spirits, did not demand many days, Iskander set out from Croia, at the head of twelve thousand men, and marched against the strong city of Petrella, meeting in his way the remainder of the garrison of Croia on their return, who surrendered themselves to him at discretion.

Petrella was only one day's march from Croia, and when Iskander arrived there he requested a conference with the governor, and told his tale so well, representing the late overthrow of the Turks by Hunniades, and the incapacity of Amurath at present to relieve him, that the Turkish commander agreed to deliver up the place, and leave the country with his troops, particularly as the alternative of Iskander to these easy terms was ever conquest without quarter. And thus, by a happy mixture of audacity and adroitness, the march of Iskander throughout Epirus was rather like a triumph than a campaign; the Turkish garrisons imitating, without any exception, the conduct of their comrades at Petrella, and dreading the fate of their comrades at the capital. In less than a month, Iskander returned to Epirus, having delivered the whole country from the Moslem yoke.

Hitherto Iskander had heard nothing either of Hunniades or of Nicæus. He learned therefore with great interest, as he passed through the gates of the city, that the Prince of Athens had arrived at Croia on the preceding eve, and also that the messenger had returned from the Hungarian camp. Amid the acclamations of an enthusiastic people, Iskander once more ascended the citadel of Croia. Nicæus received him at the gate. Iskander sprang from his horse, and embraced his friend. Hand in hand, and followed by their respective trains, they entered the fortress-palace.

"My dear friend," said Iskander, when they were once more alone, "you see we were right not to despair. Two months have scarcely elapsed since we parted without a prospect, or with the most gloomy one, and now

we are in a fair way of achieving all that we can desire. Epirus is free ! ”

“ I came to claim my share in its emancipation,” said Nicæus with a smile, “ but Iskander is another Cæsar ! ”

“ You will have many opportunities yet, believe me, Nicæus, of proving your courage and your patriotism,” replied Iskander ; “ Amurath will never allow this affair to pass over in this quiet manner. I did not commence this struggle without a conviction that it would demand all the energy and patience of a long life. I shall be rewarded if I leave freedom as a heritage to my countrymen ; but for the rest, I feel that I bid farewell to every joy of life, except the ennobling consciousness of performing a noble duty. In the mean time, I understand a messenger awaits me here from the great Hunniades. Unless that shield of Christendom maintain himself in his present position, our chance of ultimate security is feeble. With his constant diversion in Bulgaria, we may contrive here to struggle into success. You sometimes laugh at my sanguine temper, Nicæus. To say the truth, I am more serene than sanguine, and was never more conscious of the strength of my opponent than now, when it appears that I have beaten him. Hark ! the people cheer. I love the people, Nicæus, who are ever influenced by genuine and generous feelings. They cheer as if they had once more gained a country. Alas ! they little know what they must endure even at the best. Nay ! look not gloomy ; we have done great things, and will do more. Who waits without there ? Demetrius ! Call the messenger from Lord Hunniades.”

An Epirot bearing a silken packet was now introduced,

which he delivered to Iskander. Reverently touching the hand of his chieftain, the messenger then kissed his own and withdrew. Iskander broke the seal, and drew forth a letter from the silken cover.

“So! this is well!” exclaimed the prince with great animation, as he threw his quick eye over the letter. “As I hoped and deemed, a most complete victory. Karam Bey himself a prisoner, baggage, standards, great guns, treasure. Brave soldier of the cross! (may I prove so!) Your perfectly devised movement, (poh, poh!) Hah! what is this?” exclaimed Iskander, turning pale; his lip quivered, his eye looked dim. He walked to an arched window. His companion, who supposed that he was reading, did not disturb him.

“Poor, poor Hunniades!” at length exclaimed Iskander, shaking his head.

“What of him?” inquired Nicæus, quickly.

“The sharpest accident of war!” replied Iskander. “It quite clouds my spirit. We must forget these things, we must forget. Epirus! he is not a patriot who can spare a thought from thee. And yet, so young, so beautiful, so gifted, so worthy of a hero! — when I saw her by her great father’s side, sharing the toils, aiding his councils, supplying his necessities, methought I gazed upon a ministering angel! — upon —”

“Stop, stop, in mercy’s name, Iskander!” exclaimed Nicæus, in a very agitated tone. “What is all this? Surely no — surely not — surely Iduna —!”

“’T is she!”

“Dead?” exclaimed Nicæus, rushing up to his companion, and seizing his arm.

“Worse, much worse!”

“God of heaven!” exclaimed the young prince, with almost a frantic air. “Tell me all, tell me all! This suspense fires my brain. Iskander, you know not what this woman is to me, — the sole object of my being, the bane, the blessing of my life! Speak, dear friend, speak! I beseech you! where is Iduna?”

“A prisoner to the Turk.”

“Iduna a prisoner to the Turk! I’ll not believe it! Why do we wear swords? Where’s chivalry? Iduna a prisoner to the Turk! ’Tis false. It cannot be. Iskander, you are a coward! I am a coward! All are cowards! A prisoner to the Turk! Iduna! What, the rose of Christendom! has it been plucked by such a turbaned dog as Amurath? Farewell, Epirus! Farewell, classic Athens! Farewell, bright fields of Greece, and dreams that made them brighter! The sun of all my joy and hope is set, and set forever!”

So saying, Nicæus, tearing his hair and garments, flung himself upon the floor, and hid his face in his robes.

Iskander paced the room with a troubled step and thoughtful brow. After some minutes he leaned down by the Prince of Athens, and endeavored to console him.

“It is in vain, Iskander, it is in vain,” said Nicæus. “I wish to die.”

“Were I a favored lover, in such a situation,” replied Iskander, “I should scarcely consider death my duty, unless the sacrifice of myself preserved my mistress.”

“Hah!” exclaimed Nicæus, starting from the ground. “Do you conceive, then, the possibility of rescuing her?”

"If she live, she is a prisoner in the seraglio at Adrianople. You are as good a judge as myself of the prospect that awaits your exertions. It is, without doubt, a difficult adventure, but such, methinks, as a Christian knight should scarcely shun."

"To horse," exclaimed Nicæus, "to horse: and yet what can I do? Were she in any other place but the capital, I might rescue her by force, but in the heart of their empire—it is impossible. Is there no ransom that can tempt the Turk? My principality would rise in the balance beside this jewel."

"That were scarcely wise, and certainly not just," replied Iskander; "but ransom will be of no avail. Hunniades has already offered to restore Karam Bey, and all the prisoners of rank, and the chief trophies, and Amurath has refused to listen to any terms. The truth is, Iduna has found favor in the eyes of his son, the young Mahomed."

"Holy Virgin! hast thou no pity on this Christian maid?" exclaimed Nicæus. "The young Mahomed! Shall this licentious infidel— Ah! Iskander, dear, dear Iskander, you who have so much wisdom and so much courage, you who can devise all things and dare all things, help me, help me; on my knees, I do beseech you, take up this crying cause of foul oppression, and for the sake of all you love and reverence, — your creed, your country, and perchance your friend, — let your great genius, like some solemn angel, haste to the rescue of the sweet Iduna, and save her, save her!"

"Some thoughts like these were rising in my mind when first I spoke," replied Iskander. "This is a bet-

ter cue, far more befitting princes than boyish tears, and all the outward misery of woe, a tattered garment and dishevelled locks. Come, Nicæus, we have to struggle with a mighty fortune. Let us be firm as fate itself."

### VIII.

IMMEDIATELY after his interview with Nicæus, Iskander summoned some of the chief citizens of Croia to the citadel, and submitting to them his arrangements for the administration of Epirus, announced the necessity of his instant departure for a short interval; and the same evening, ere the moon had risen, himself and the Prince of Athens quitted the city, and proceeded in the direction of Adrianople. They travelled with great rapidity until they reached a small town upon the frontiers, where they halted for one day. Here, in the bazaar, Iskander purchased for himself the dress of an Armenian physician. In his long dark robes, and large round cap of black wool, his face and hands stained, and his beard and mustachios shaven, it seemed impossible that he could be recognized. Nicæus was habited as his page, in a dress of coarse red cloth, sitting tight to his form, with a red cap, with a long blue tassel. He carried a large bag containing drugs, some surgical instruments, and a few books. In this guise, as soon as the gates were open on the morrow, Iskander mounted on a very small mule, and Nicæus on a very large donkey, the two princes commenced the pass of the mountainous range, an arm of the Balkan, which divided Epirus from Roumelia.

"I broke the wind of the finest charger in all Asia



when I last ascended these mountains," said Iskander; "I hope this day's journey may be accepted as a sort of atonement."

"Faith! there is little doubt I am the better mounted of the two," said Nicæus. "However, I hope we shall return at a sharper pace."

"How came it, my Nicæus," said Iskander, "that you never mentioned to me the name of Iduna when we were at Athens? I little supposed, when I made my sudden visit to Hunniades, that I was about to appear to so fair a host. She is a rarely gifted lady."

"I knew of her being at the camp as little as yourself," replied the Prince of Athens; "and for the rest, the truth is, Iskander, there are some slight crosses in our loves, which time, I hope, will fashion rightly." So saying, Nicæus pricked on his donkey, and flung his stick at a bird which was perched on the branch of a tree. Iskander did not resume a topic to which his companion seemed disinclined. Their journey was tedious. Towards nightfall they reached the summit of the usual track; and as the descent was difficult, they were obliged to rest until daybreak.

On the morrow they had a magnificent view of the rich plains of Roumelia, and in the extreme distance, the great city of Adrianople, its cupolas and minarets blazing and sparkling in the sun. This glorious prospect at once revived all their energies. It seemed that the moment of peril and of fate had arrived. They pricked on their sorry steeds; and on the morning of the next day presented themselves at the gates of the city. The thorough knowledge which Iskander possessed of the Turk-

ish character obtained them an entrance, which was at one time almost doubtful, from the irritability and impatience of Nicæus. They repaired to a caravansera of good repute in the neighborhood of the seraglio; and having engaged their rooms, the Armenian physician, attended by his page, visited several of the neighboring coffee-houses, announcing, at the same time, his arrival, his profession, and his skill.

As Iskander felt pulses, examined tongues, and distributed drugs and charms, he listened with interest and amusement to the conversation of which he himself was often the hero. He found that the Turks had not yet recovered from their consternation at his audacity and success. They were still wondering, and if possible more astounded than indignant. The politicians of the coffee-houses, chiefly consisting of janissaries, were loud in their murmurs. The popularity of Amurath had vanished before the triumph of Hunniades and the rise of Iskander.

"But Allah has in some instances favored the faithful," remarked Iskander; "I heard in my travels of your having captured a great princess of the Giaours?"

"God is great!" said an elderly Turk with a long white beard. "The hakim congratulates the faithful because they have taken a woman!"

"Not so, merely," replied Iskander; "I heard the woman was a princess. If so, the people of Franguestan will pay any ransom for their great women; and by giving up this fair Giaour, you may free many of the faithful."

"Mashallah!" said another ancient Turk, sipping his coffee. "The hakim speaks wisely."

“May I murder my mother!” exclaimed a young janissary, with great indignation. “But this is the very thing that makes me wild against Amurath. Is not this princess a daughter of that accursed Giaour, that dog of dogs, Hunniades? and has he not offered for her ransom our brave Karam Bey himself, and his chosen warriors? and has not Amurath said nay? And why has he said nay? Because his son, the Prince Mahomed, instead of fighting against the Giaours, has looked upon one of their women, and has become a mejnoun. Pah! May I murder my mother, — but if the Giaours were in full march to the city, I’d not fight. And let him tell this to the cadì who dares; for there are ten thousand of us, and we have sworn by the kettle — but we will not fight for Giaours, or those who love Giaours!”

“If you mean me, Ali, about going to the cadì,” said the chief eunuch of Mahomed, who was standing by, “let me tell you I am no tale-bearer, and scorn to do an unmanly act. The young prince can beat the Giaours without the aid of those who are noisy enough in a coffee-house, when they are quiet enough in the field. And, for the rest of the business, you may all ease your hearts; for the frangy princess you talk of is pining away, and will soon die. The sultan has offered a hundred purses of gold to any one who cures her; but the gold will never be counted by the hasnadar, or I will double it.”

“Try your fortune, hakim,” said several laughing loungers to Iskander.

“Allah has stricken the frangy princess,” said the old Turk with a white beard.

“He will strike all Giaours,” said his ancient companion, sipping his coffee. “’T is so written.”

“Well! I do not like to hear of woman-slaves pining to death,” said the young janissary, in a softened tone, “particularly when they are young. Amurath should have ransomed her, or he might have given her to one of his officers, or any young fellow that had particularly distinguished himself.” And so, twirling his mustachios, and flinging down his piastre, the young janissary strutted out of the coffee-house.

“When we were young,” said the old Turk with the white beard, to his companion, shaking his head, — “when we were young — ”

“We conquered Anatolia, and never opened our mouths,” rejoined his companion.

“I never offered an opinion till I was sixty,” said the old Turk; “and then it was one which had been in our family for a century.”

“No wonder Hunniades carries everything before him,” said his companion.

“And that accursed Iskander,” said the old man.

The chief eunuch, finishing his vase of sherbet, moved away. The Armenian physician followed him.

## IX.

THE chief eunuch turned into a burial-ground, through which a way led, by an avenue of cypress-trees, to the quarter of the seraglio. The Armenian physician, accompanied by his page, followed him.

“Noble sir!” said the Armenian physician; “may

I trespass for a moment on your lordship's attention?"

"Worthy hakim, is it you?" replied the chief eunuch, turning round with an encouraging smile of courteous condescension, — "your pleasure?"

"I would speak to you of important matters," said the physician.

The eunuch carelessly seated himself on a richly carved tomb, and, crossing his legs with an air of pleasant superiority, adjusted a fine emerald that sparkled on his finger, and bade the hakim address him without hesitation.

"I am a physician," said the Armenian.

The eunuch nodded.

"And I heard your lordship in the coffee-house mention that the sultan, our sublime master, had offered a rich reward to any one who could effect the cure of a favorite captive."

"No less a reward than one hundred purses of gold," remarked the eunuch. "The reward is proportioned to the exigency of the case. Believe me, worthy sir, it is desperate."

"With mortal means," replied the Armenian; "but I possess a talisman of magical influence, which no disorder can resist. I would fain try its efficacy."

"This is not the first talisman that has been offered us, worthy doctor," said the eunuch, smiling incredulously.

"But the first that has been offered on these terms," said the Armenian. "Let me cure the captive, and of the one hundred purses, a moiety shall belong to yourself. Ay! so confident am I of success, that I deem it no hazard to commence our contract by this surety."

And so saying, the Armenian took from his finger a gorgeous carbuncle, and offered it to the eunuch. The worthy dependant of the seraglio had a great taste in jewelry. He examined the stone with admiration, and placed it on his finger with complacency. "I require no inducements to promote the interests of science and the purposes of charity," said the eunuch, with a patronizing air. "'T is assuredly a pretty stone, and, as the memorial of an ingenious stranger, whom I respect, I shall, with pleasure, retain it. You were saying something about a talisman. Are you serious? I doubt not that there are means which might obtain you the desired trial; but the Prince Mahomed is as violent when displeased or disappointed as munificent when gratified. Cure this Christian captive, and we may certainly receive the promised purses; fail, and your head will as assuredly be flung into the seraglio moat, to say nothing of my own."

"Most noble sir!" said the physician; "I am willing to undertake the experiment on the terms you mentioned. Rest assured that the patient, if alive, must, with this remedy, speedily recover. You marvel! Believe me, had you witnessed the cures which it has already effected, you would only wonder at its otherwise incredible influence."

"You have the advantage," replied the eunuch, "of addressing a man who has seen something of the world. I travel every year to Anatolia with the Prince Mahomed. Were I a narrow-minded bigot, who had never been five miles from Adrianople in the whole course of my life, I might indeed be sceptical. But I am a patron of science, and have heard of talismans. How much might this ring weigh, think you?"

"I have heard it spoken of as a carbuncle of uncommon size," replied the Armenian.

"Where did you say you lodged, hakim?"

"At the khan of Bedreddin."

"A very proper dwelling. Well, we shall see. Have you more jewels? I might, perhaps, put you in the way of parting with some at good prices. The khan of Bedreddin is very conveniently situated. I may, perhaps, towards evening, taste your coffee at the khan of Bedreddin, and we will talk of this said talisman. Allah be with you, worthy hakim!" The eunuch nodded, not without encouragement, and went his way.

"Anxiety alone enabled me to keep my countenance," said Nicæus. "A patron of science, forsooth! Of all the insolent, shallow-brained, rapacious coxcombs —"

"Hush, my friend!" said Iskander, with a smile. "The chief eunuch of the heir-apparent of the Turkish empire is a far greater man than a poor prince or a proscribed rebel. This worthy can do our business, and I trust will. He clearly bites, and a richer bait will perhaps secure him. In the mean time, we must be patient, and remember whose destiny is at stake."

## X.

THE chief eunuch did not keep the adventurous companions long in suspense; for before the muczzin had announced the close of day from the minarets, he had reached the khan of Bedreddin, and inquired for the Armenian physician.

"We have no time to lose," said the eunuch to Is-

kander. "Bring with you whatever you may require, and follow me."

The eunuch led the way, Iskander and Nicæus maintaining a respectful distance. After proceeding down several streets, they arrived at the burial-ground, where they had conversed in the morning; and when they had entered this more retired spot, the eunuch fell back, and addressed his companion.

"Now, worthy hakim," he said, "if you deceive me, I will never patronize a man of science again. I found an opportunity of speaking to the prince this afternoon of your talisman, and he has taken from my representations such a fancy for its immediate proof, that I found it quite impossible to postpone its trial even until to-morrow. I mentioned the terms. I told the prince your life was the pledge. I said nothing of the moiety of the reward, worthy hakim. That is an affair between ourselves. I trust to your honor, and I always act thus with men of science."

"I shall not disgrace my profession or your confidence, rest assured," replied Iskander. "And am I to see the captive to-night?"

"I doubt it not. Are you prepared? We might, perhaps, gain a little time, if very necessary."

"By no means, sir; truth is ever prepared."

Thus conversing, they passed through the burial-ground, and approached some high, broad walls, forming a terrace, and planted with young sycamore-trees. The eunuch tapped, with his silver stick, at a small gate, which opened and admitted them into a garden, full of large clumps of massy shrubs. Through these a wind-



ing walk led for some way, and then conducted them to an open lawn, on which was situated a vast and irregular building. As they approached the pile, a young man of very imperious aspect rushed forward from a gate, and abruptly accosted Iskander.

“Are you the Armenian physician?” he inquired.

Iskander bowed assent.

“Have you got your talisman? You know the terms? Cure this Christian girl, and you shall name your own reward; fail, and I shall claim your forfeited head.”

“The terms are well understood, mighty prince,” said Iskander, for the young man was no less a personage than the son of Amurath, and future conqueror of Constantinople; “but I am confident there will be no necessity for the terror of Christendom claiming any other heads than those of his enemies.”

“Kafis will conduct you at once to your patient,” said Mahomed. “For myself, I cannot rest until I know the result of your visit. I shall wander about these gardens, and destroy the flowers, which is the only pleasure now left me.”

Kafis motioned to his companions to advance, and they entered the seraglio.

At the end of a long gallery they came to a great portal, which Kafis opened, and Iskander and Nicæus for a moment supposed that they had arrived at the chief hall of the tower of Babel, but they found the shrill din only proceeded from a large company of women, who were employed in distilling the rare attar of the jessamine flower. All their voices ceased on the entrance of the strangers, as if by a miracle; but when

they had examined them, and observed that it was only a physician and his boy, their awe, or their surprise, disappeared; and they crowded round Iskander, some holding out their wrists, others lolling out their tongues, and some asking questions, which perplexed alike the skill and the modesty of the adventurous dealer in magical medicine. The annoyance, however, was not of great duration, for Kafilis so belabored their fair shoulders with his official baton, that they instantly retreated with precipitation, uttering the most violent shrieks, and bestowing on the eunuch so many titles, that Iskander and his page were quite astounded at the intuitive knowledge which the imprisoned damsels possessed of that vocabulary of abuse which is in general mastered only by the experience of active existence.

Quitting this chamber, the eunuch and his companions ascended a lofty staircase. They halted, at length, before a door. "This is the chamber of the tower," said their guide, "and here we shall find the fair captive." He knocked, the door was opened by a female slave, and Iskander and Nicæus, with an anxiety they could with difficulty conceal, were ushered into a small but sumptuous apartment. In the extremity was a recess covered with a light gauzy curtain. The eunuch, bidding them keep in the background, advanced, and cautiously withdrawing the curtain slightly aside, addressed some words in a low voice to the inmate of the recess. In a few minutes the eunuch beckoned to Iskander to advance, and whispered to him, "She would not at first see you, but I have told her you are a Christian, — the more the pity, — and she consents." So saying, he

withdrew the curtain, and exhibited a veiled female figure lying on a couch.

"Noble lady," said the physician in Greek, which he had ascertained the eunuch did not comprehend; "pardon the zeal of a Christian friend. Though habited in this garb, I have served under your illustrious sire. I should deem my life well spent in serving the daughter of the great Hunniades."

"Kind stranger," replied the captive, "I was ill-prepared for such a meeting. I thank you for your sympathy, but my sad fortunes are beyond human aid."

"God works by humble instruments, noble lady," said Iskander, "and with his blessing we may yet prosper."

"I fear that I must look to death as my only refuge," replied Iduna, "and still more, I fear that it is not so present a refuge as my oppressors themselves imagine. But you are a physician; tell me, then, how speedily nature will make me free."

She held forth her hand, which Iskander took and involuntarily pressed. "Noble lady," he said, "my skill is mere pretence to enter these walls. The only talisman I bear with me is a message from your friends."

"Indeed!" said Iduna, in a very agitated tone.

"Restrain yourself, noble lady," said Iskander, interposing, — "restrain yourself. Were you any other but the daughter of Hunniades, I would not have ventured upon this perilous exploit. But I know that the Lady Iduna has inherited something more than the name of her great ancestors, — their heroic soul. If ever there

were a moment in her life in which it behoved her to exert all her energies, that moment has arrived. The physician who addresses her, and his attendant who waits at hand, are two of the Lady Iduna's most devoted friends. There is nothing that they will not hazard to effect her deliverance; and they have matured a plan of escape which they are sanguine must succeed. Yet its completion will require, on her part, great anxiety of mind, greater exertion of body, danger, fatigue, privation. Is the Lady Iduna prepared for all this endurance and all this hazard?"

"Noble friend," replied Iduna, "for I cannot deem you a stranger, and none but a most chivalric knight could have entered upon this almost forlorn adventure, you have not, I trust, miscalculated my character. I am a slave, and unless Heaven will interpose, must soon be a dishonored one. My freedom and my fame are alike at stake. There is no danger and no suffering which I will not gladly welcome, provided there be even a remote chance of regaining my liberty and securing my honor."

"You are in the mind I counted on. Now, mark my words, dear lady. Seize an opportunity this evening of expressing to your jailers that you have already experienced some benefit from my visit, and announce your rising confidence in my skill. In the mean time I will make such a report that our daily meetings will not be difficult. For the present, farewell. The Prince Mahomed waits without, and I would exchange some words with him before I go."

"And must we part without my being acquainted

with the generous friends to whom I am indebted for an act of devotion which almost reconciles me to my sad fate?" said Iduna. "You will not, perhaps, deem the implicit trust reposed in you by one whom you have no interest to deceive, and who, if deceived, cannot be placed in a worse position than she at present fills, as a very gratifying mark of confidence, yet that trust is reposed in you, and let me at least soothe the galling dreariness of my solitary hours, by the recollection of the friends to whom I am indebted for a deed of friendship which has filled me with a feeling of wonder from which I have not yet recovered."

"The person who has penetrated the seraglio of Constantinople in disguise, to rescue the Lady Iduna," answered Iskander, "is the Prince Nicæus."

"Nicæus!" exclaimed Iduna, in an agitated tone. "The voice to which I listen is surely not that of the Prince Nicæus; nor the form on which I gaze," she added, as she unveiled. Beside her stood the tall figure of the Armenian physician. She beheld his swarthy and unrecognized countenance. She cast her dark eyes around with an air of beautiful perplexity.

"I am a friend of the Prince Nicæus," said the physician. "He is here. Shall he advance? — Alexis," called out Iskander, not waiting for her reply. The page of the physician came forward, but the eunuch accompanied him. "All is right," said Iskander to Kafilis. "We are sure of our hundred purses. But, without doubt, with any other aid, the case were desperate."

"There is but one God," said the eunuch, polishing

his carbuncle, with a visage radiant as the gem. "I never repented patronizing men of science. The prince waits without. Come along." He took Iskander by the arm. "Where is your boy? What are you doing there, sir?" inquired the eunuch, sharply, of Nicæus, who was tarrying behind and kissing the hand of Iduna.

"I was asking the lady for a favor to go to the coffee-house with," replied Nicæus, with pouting lips; "you forget that I am to have none of the hundred purses."

"True," said the eunuch; "there is something in that. Here, boy, here is a piastre for you. I like to encourage men of science, and all that belong to them. Do not go and spend it all in one morning, boy, and when the fair captive is cured, if you remind me, boy, perhaps I may give you another."

## XI.

KAFLIS and his charge again reached the garden. The twilight was nearly past. A horseman galloped up to them, followed by several running footmen. It was the prince.

"Well, hakim," he inquired, in his usual abrupt style, "can you cure her?"

"Yes," answered Iskander, firmly.

"Now listen, hakim," said Mahomed. "I must very shortly leave the city, and proceed into Epirus at the head of our troops. I have sworn two things, and I have sworn them by the holy stone. Ere the new moon, I will have the heart of Iduna and the head of Iskander!"

The physician bowed.

"If you can so restore the health of this frangy girl," continued Mahomed, "that she may attend me within ten days into Epirus, you shall claim from my treasury what sum you like, and become physician to the seraglio. What say you?"

"My hope and my belief is," replied Iskander, "that within ten days she may breathe the air of Epirus."

"By my father's beard, you are a man after my own heart," exclaimed the prince; "and since thou dealest in talismans, hakim, can you give me a charm that will secure me a meeting with this Epirot rebel within the term, so that I may keep my oath. What say you?—what say you?"

"There are such spells," replied Iskander. "But mark, I can only secure the meeting, not the head."

"That is my part," said Mahomed, with an arrogant sneer. "But the meeting, the meeting?"

"You know the fountain of Kallista in Epirus. Its virtues are renowned."

"I have heard of it."

"Plunge your cimeter in its midnight waters thrice, on the eve of the new moon, and each time summon the enemy you would desire to meet. He will not fail you."

"If you cure the captive, I will credit the legend, and keep the appointment," replied Mahomed, thoughtfully.

"I have engaged to do that," replied the physician.

"Well, then, I shall redeem my pledge," said the prince.

"But mind," said the physician, "while I engage to

cure the lady, and produce the warrior, I can secure your highness neither the heart of the one nor the head of the other."

"'T is understood," said Mahomed.

## XII.

THE Armenian physician did not fail to attend his captive patient at an early hour on the ensuing morn. His patron Kafis received him with an encouraging smile. "The talisman already works," said the eunuch; "she has passed a good night, and confesses to an improvement. Our purses are safe. Methinks I already count the gold. But I say, worthy hakim, come hither, come hither." And Kafis looked around to be sure that no one was within hearing. "I say," and here he put on a very mysterious air indeed, "the prince is generous: you understand? We go shares. We shall not quarrel. I never yet repented patronizing a man of science, and I am sure I never shall. The prince, you see, is violent, but generous. I would not cure her too soon, eh?"

"You take a most discreet view of affairs," responded Iskander, with an air of complete assent, and they entered the chamber of the tower.

Iduna performed her part with great dexterity; but indeed it required less skill than she and her advisers had at first imagined. Her malady, although it might have ended fatally, was, in its origin, entirely mental, and the sudden prospect of freedom, and of restoration to her country and her family, at a moment when she had delivered herself up to despair, afforded her a great



and instantaneous benefit. She could not indeed sufficiently restrain her spirits, and smiled incredulously when Iskander mentioned the impending exertion and fatigues, with doubt and apprehension. His anxiety to return immediately to Epirus determined him to adopt the measures for her rescue without loss of time, and on his third visit he prepared her for making the great attempt on the ensuing morn. Hitherto Iskander had refrained from revealing himself to Iduna. He was induced to adopt this conduct by various considerations. He could no longer conceal from himself that the daughter of Hunniades exercised an influence over his feelings which he was unwilling to encourage. His sincere friendship for Nicæus, and his conviction that it was his present duty to concentrate all his thought and affection in the cause of his country, would have rendered him anxious to resist any emotions of the kind, even could he have flattered himself that there was any chance of their being returned by the object of his rising passion. But Iskander was as modest as he was brave and gifted. The disparity of age between himself and Iduna appeared an insuperable barrier to his hopes, even had there been no other obstacle. Iskander struggled with his love, and with his strong mind the struggle, though painful, was not without success. He felt that he was acting in a manner which must ultimately tend to the advantage of his country, the happiness of his friend, and perhaps the maintenance of his own self-respect; for he had too much pride not to be very sensible to the bitterness of rejection.

Had he perceived more indications of a very cordial

feeling subsisting between Nicæus and Iduna, he would, perhaps, not have persisted in maintaining his disguise. But he had long suspected that the passion of the Prince of Athens was not too favorably considered by the daughter of Humniades, and he was therefore exceedingly anxious that Nicæus should possess all the credit of the present adventure, which Iskander scarcely doubted, if successful, would allow Nicæus to urge irresistible claims to the heart of a mistress whom he had rescued, at the peril of his life, from slavery and dishonor, to offer rank, reputation, and love. Iskander took, therefore, several opportunities of leading Iduna to believe that he was merely a confidential agent of Nicæus, and that the whole plan of her rescue from the seraglio of Adrianople had been planned by his young friend. During the three days on which they had for short intervals met, very few words had been interchanged between Nicæus and his mistress. Those words, indeed, had been to him of the most inspiring nature, and expressed such a deep sense of gratitude, and such lively regard, that Nicæus could no longer resist the delightful conviction that he had at length created a permanent interest in her heart. Often he longed to rush to her couch, and press her hand to his lips. Even the anticipation of future happiness could not prevent him from envying the good fortune of Iskander, who was allowed to converse with her without restraint; and bitterly, on their return to the khan, did he execrate the pompous eunuch for all the torture which he occasioned him by his silly conversation, and the petty tyranny of office with which Kafis

always repressed his attempts to converse for a moment with Iduna.

In the mean time all Adrianople sounded with the preparations for the immediate invasion of Epirus, and the return of Iskander to his country became each hour more urgent. Everything being prepared, the adventurers determined on the fourth morning to attempt the rescue. They repaired as usual to the serail, and were attended by Kafilis to the chamber of the tower, who congratulated Iskander, on their way, on the rapid convalescence of the captive. When they had fairly entered the chamber, the physician being somewhat in advance, Nicæus, who was behind, commenced proceedings by knocking down the eunuch, and Iskander instantly turning round to his assistance, they succeeded in gagging and binding the alarmed and astonished Kafilis. Iduna then habited herself in a costume exactly similar to that worn by Nicæus, which her friends had brought to her in their bag. Iskander and Iduna then immediately quitted the serail without notice or suspicion, and hurried to the khan, where they mounted their horses, that were in readiness, and hastened without a moment's loss of time to a fountain without the gates, where they awaited the arrival of Nicæus with anxiety. After remaining a few minutes in the chamber of the tower, the Prince of Athens stole out, taking care to secure the door upon Kafilis. He descended the staircase, and escaped through the serail without meeting any one, and had nearly reached the gate of the gardens, when he was challenged by some of the eunuch guard at a little distance.

“Hilloa!” exclaimed one, “I thought you passed just now?”

“So I did,” replied Nicæus, with nervous effrontery; “but I came back for my bag, which I left behind.” And giving them no time to reflect, he pushed his way through the gate with all the impudence of a page. He rushed through the burial-ground, hurried through the streets, mounted his horse, and galloped through the gates. Iskander and Iduna were in sight; he waved his hand for them at once to proceed, and in a moment, without exchanging a word, they were all galloping at full speed, nor did they breathe their horses until sunset.

By nightfall they had reached a small wood of chestnut-trees, where they rested for two hours, more for the sake of their steeds than their own refreshment; for anxiety prevented Iduna from indulging in any repose, as much as excitement prevented her from feeling any fatigue. Iskander lit a fire and prepared their rough meal, unharnessed the horses, and turned them out to their pasture. Nicæus made Iduna a couch of fern, and supported her head, while, in deference to his entreaties, she endeavored in vain to sleep. Before midnight they were again on their way, and proceeded at a rapid pace towards the mountains, until a few hours before noon, when their horses began to sink under the united influence of their previous exertions and the increasing heat of the day. Iskander looked serious, and often threw a backward glance in the direction of Adrianople.

“We must be beyond pursuit,” said Nicæus. “I dare say poor Kafilis is still gagged and bound.”

“Could we but once reach the mountains,” replied his

companion, "I should have little fear, but I counted upon our steeds carrying us there without faltering. We cannot reckon upon more than three hours' start, prince. Our friend Kafiis is too important a personage to be long missed."

"The Holy Virgin befriend us!" said the Lady Iduna. "I can urge my poor horse no more."

They had now ascended a small rising ground which gave them a wide prospect over the plain. Iskander halted, and threw an anxious glance around him.

"There are some horsemen in the distance whom I do not like," said the physician.

"I see them," said Nicæus; "travellers like ourselves."

"Let us die sooner than be taken," said Iduna.

"Move on," said the physician, "and let me observe these horsemen alone. I would there were some forest at hand. In two hours we may gain the mountains."

The daughter of Hunniades and the Prince of Athens descended the rising ground. Before them, but at a considerable distance, was a broad and rapid river, crossed by a ruinous Roman bridge. The opposite bank of the river was the termination of a narrow plain, which led immediately to the mountains.

"Fair Iduna, you are safe," said the Prince of Athens.

"Dear Nicæus," replied his companion, "imagine what I feel. It is too wild a moment to express my gratitude."

"I trust that Iduna will never express her *gratitude* to Nicæus," answered the prince; "it is not, I assure you, a favorite word with him."

Their companion rejoined them, urging his wearied horse to its utmost speed.

"Nicæus!" he called out, "halt!"

They stopped their willing horses.

"How now! my friend," said the prince; "you look grave!"

"Lady Iduna!" said the Armenian, "we are pursued."

Hitherto the prospect of success, and the consciousness of the terrible destiny that awaited failure, had supported Iduna under exertions which, under any other circumstances, must have proved fatal. But to learn, at the very moment that she was congratulating herself on the felicitous completion of their daring enterprise, that that dreaded failure was absolutely impending, demanded too great an exertion of her exhausted energies. She turned pale; she lifted her imploring hands and eyes to heaven in speechless agony, and then, bending down her head, wept with unrestrained and harrowing violence. The distracted Nicæus sprung from his horse, endeavored to console the almost insensible Iduna, and then, wofully glancing at his fellow-adventurer, wrung his hands in despair. His fellow-adventurer seemed lost in thought.

"They come," said Nicæus, starting; "methinks I see one on the brow of the hill. Away! fly! Let us at least die fighting. Dear, dear Iduna, would that my life could ransom thine! O God! this is indeed agony."

"Escape is impossible," said Iduna, in a tone of calmness which astonished them. "They must overtake us. Alas! brave friends, I have brought ye to this! Pardon

me! pardon me! I am ashamed of my selfish grief. Ascribe it to other causes than a narrow spirit and a weak mind. One course is alone left to us. We must not be taken prisoners. Ye are warriors, and can die as such. I am only a woman, but I am the daughter of Hunniades. Nicæus, you are my father's friend; I beseech you, sheathe your dagger in my breast."

The prince in silent agony pressed his hands to his sight. His limbs quivered with terrible emotion. Suddenly he advanced and threw himself at the feet of his hitherto silent comrade. "O Iskander!" exclaimed Nicæus, "great and glorious friend! my head and heart are both too weak for these awful trials! Save her, save her!"

"Iskander!" exclaimed the thunderstruck Iduna, —  
"Iskander!"

"I have, indeed, the misfortune to be Iskander, beloved lady," he replied. "This is, indeed, a case almost of desperation, but if I have to endure more than most men, I have, to inspire me, influences which fall to the lot of few, — yourself and Epirus. Come! Nicæus, there is but one chance, — we must gain the bridge." Thus speaking, Iskander caught Iduna in his arms, and, remounting his steed, and followed by the Prince of Athens, hurried towards the river.

"The water is not fordable," said Iskander, when they had arrived at its bank. "The bridge I shall defend; and it will go hard if I do not keep them at bay long enough for you and Iduna to gain the mountains. Away; think no more of me; nay! no tear, dear lady, or you will unman me. An inspiring smile, and all will go

well. Hasten to Croia, and let nothing tempt you to linger in the vicinity, with the hope of my again joining you. Believe me, we shall meet again, but act upon what I say, as if they were my dying words. God bless you, Nicæus! No murmuring. For once let the physician, indeed, command his page. Gentle lady, commend me to your father. Would I had such a daughter in Epirus, to head my trusty brethren if I fall! Tell the great Hunniades, my legacy to him is my country. Farewell, farewell!"

"I will not say farewell," exclaimed Iduna; "I too can fight. I will stay and die with you."

"See, they come! Believe me, I shall conquer. Fly, fly, thou noble girl! Guard her well, Nicæus. God bless thee, boy! Live and be happy. Nay, nay, not another word. The farther ye are both distant, trust me, the stronger will be my arm. Indeed, indeed, I do beseech ye, fly!"

Nicæus placed the weeping Iduna in her saddle, and after leading her horse over the narrow and broken bridge, mounted his own, and then they ascended together the hilly and winding track. Iskander watched them as they went. Often Iduna waved her kerchief to her forlorn champion. In the mean time Iskander tore off his Armenian robes and flung them into the river, tried his footing on the position he had taken up, stretched his limbs, examined his daggers, flourished his cimeter.

The bridge would only permit a single rider to pass abreast. It was supported by three arches, the centre one of very considerable size, the others small, and rising



out of the shallow water on each side. In many parts the parapet wall was broken, in some even the pathway was almost impassable, from the masses of fallen stone and the dangerous fissures. In the centre of the middle arch was an immense keystone, on which was sculptured, in high relief, an enormous helmet, which indeed gave, among the people of the country, a title to the bridge.

A band of horsemen dashed at full speed, with a loud shout, down the hill. They checked their horses, when to their astonishment they found Iskander with his drawn cimeter, prepared to resist their passage. But they paused only for a moment, and immediately attempted to swim the river. But their exhausted horses drew back with a strong instinct from the rushing waters; one of the band alone, mounted on a magnificent black mare, succeeding in his purpose. The rider was half-way in the stream, his high-bred steed snorting and struggling in the strong current. Iskander, with the same ease as if he were plucking the ripe fruit from a tree, took up a ponderous stone, and hurled it with fatal precision at his adventurous enemy. The rider shrieked and fell, and rose no more: the mare, relieved from her burden, exerted all her failing energies, and succeeded in gaining the opposite bank. There, rolling herself in the welcome pasture, and, neighing with a note of triumph, she revelled in her hard escape.

“Cut down the Giaour!” exclaimed one of the horsemen; and he dashed at the bridge. His fragile blade shivered into a thousand pieces as it crossed the cimeter of Iskander, and in a moment his bleeding head fell over the parapet.

Instantly the whole band, each emulous of revenging his comrades, rushed without thought at Iskander, and endeavored to overpower him by their irresistible charge. His cimeter flashed like lightning. The two foremost of his enemies fell ; but the impulse of the numbers prevailed, and each instant, although dealing destruction with every blow, he felt himself losing ground. At length he was on the centre of the centre arch, an eminent position, which allowed him for a moment to keep them at bay, and gave him breathing-time. Suddenly he made a desperate charge, clove the head of the leader of the band in two, and beat them back several yards ; then swiftly returning to his former position, he summoned all his supernatural strength, and stamping on the mighty, but mouldering keystone, he forced it from its form, and broke the masonry of a thousand years. Amid a loud and awful shriek, horses and horsemen and the dissolving fragments of the scene for a moment mingled, as it were, in airy chaos, and then plunged with a horrible plash into the fatal depths below. Some fell, and, stunned by the massy fragments, rose no more ; others struggled again into light, and gained with difficulty their old shore. Amid them, Iskander, unhurt, swam like a river-god, and stabbed to the heart the only strong swimmer that was making his way in the direction of Epirus. Drenched and exhausted, Iskander at length stood upon the opposite margin, and wrung his garments, while he watched the scene of strange destruction.

Three or four exhausted wretches were lying bruised and breathless on the opposite bank : one drowned horse was stranded near them, caught by the rushes. Of all

that brave company the rest had vanished, and the broad and blue and sunny waters rushed without a shadow beneath the two remaining arches.

“Iduna! thou art safe,” exclaimed Iskander. “Now for Epirus!” So saying, he seized the black mare, renovated by her bath and pasture, and, vaulting on her back, was in a few minutes bounding over his native hills.

### XIII.

LET us not forget the Prince of Athens and the Lady Iduna. These adventurous companions soon lost sight of their devoted champion, and entered a winding ravine, which gradually brought them to the summit of the first chain of the Epirot mountains. From it they looked down upon a vast and rocky valley, through which several mule-tracks led in various directions, and entered the highest barrier of the mountains which rose before them, covered with forests of chestnut and ilex. Nicæus chose the track which he considered least tempting to pursuit, and towards sunset they had again entered a ravine washed by a mountain stream. The course of the waters had made the earth fertile and beautiful. Wild shrubs of gay and pleasant colors refreshed their wearied eyesight, and the perfumes of aromatic plants invigorated their jaded senses. Upon the bank, too, of the river a large cross of roughly carved wood brought comfort to their Christian hearts, and while the holy emblem filled them with hope and consolation, and seemed an omen of refuge from their Moslemin oppressors, a venerable eremite, with a long white beard descending

over his dark robes, and leaning on a staff of thorn, came forth from an adjoining cavern to breathe the evening air and pour forth his evening orisons.

Iduna and Nicæus had hitherto prosecuted their sorrowful journey almost in silence. Exhausted with anxiety, affliction, and bodily fatigue, with difficulty the daughter of Hunniades could preserve her seat upon her steed. One thought alone interested her, and, by its engrossing influence, maintained her under all sufferings, — the memory of Iskander. Since she first met him, at the extraordinary interview in her father's pavilion, often had the image of the hero recurred to her fancy, often had she mused over his great qualities and strange career. His fame, so dangerous to female hearts, was not diminished by his presence. And now, when Iduna recollected that she was indebted to him for all that she held dear, that she owed to his disinterested devotion not only life, but all that renders life desirable, — honor and freedom, country and kindred, — that image was invested with associations and with sentiments which, had Iskander himself been conscious of their existence, would have lent redoubled vigor to his arm, and fresh inspiration to his energy. More than once Iduna had been on the point of inquiring of Nicæus the reason which had induced alike him and Iskander to preserve so strictly the disguise of his companion. But a feeling which she did not choose to analyze struggled successfully with her curiosity: she felt a reluctance to speak of Iskander to the Prince of Athens. In the mean time, Nicæus himself was not apparently very anxious of conversing upon the subject, and after the first rapid

expressions of fear and hope as to the situation of their late comrade, they relapsed into silence, seldom broken by Nicæus but to deplore the sufferings of his mistress, — lamentations which Iduna answered with a faint smile.

The refreshing scene wherein they had now entered, and the cheering appearance of the eremite, were subjects of mutual congratulation; and Nicæus, somewhat advancing, claimed the attention of the holy man, announcing their faith, imprisonment, escape, and sufferings, and entreating hospitality and refuge. The eremite pointed with his staff to the winding path which ascended the bank of the river to the cavern, and welcomed the pilgrims in the name of their blessed Saviour to his wild abode and simple fare.

The cavern widened when they entered, and comprised several small apartments. It was a work of the early Christians, who had found a refuge in their days of persecution, and art had completed the beneficent design of nature. The cavern was fresh, and sweet, and clean. Heaven smiled upon its pious inmate through an aperture in the roof; the floor was covered with rushes; in one niche rested a brazen cross, and in another a perpetual lamp burned before a picture, where Madonna smiled with meek tenderness upon her young divinity.

The eremite placed upon a block of wood, the surface of which he had himself smoothed, some honey, some dried fish, and a wooden bowl filled with the pure stream that flowed beneath them; a simple meal, but welcome. His guests seated themselves upon a rushy couch, and while they refreshed themselves, he gently inquired the history of their adventures. As it was evident that the

eremite, from her apparel, mistook the sex of Iduna, Nicæus thought fit not to undeceive him, but passed her off as his brother. He described themselves as two Athenian youths, who had been captured while serving as volunteers under the great Humniades, and who had effected their escape from Adrianople under circumstances of great peril and difficulty; and when he had gratified the eremite's curiosity respecting their Christian brethren in Paynim lands, and sympathetically marvelled with him at the advancing fortunes of the crescent, Nicæus, who perceived that Iduna stood in great need of rest, mentioned the fatigues of his more fragile brother, and requested permission for him to retire. Whereupon the eremite himself, fetching a load of fresh rushes, arranged them in one of the cells, and invited the fair Iduna to repose. The daughter of Humniades, first humbling herself before the altar of the Virgin, and offering her gratitude for all the late mercies vouchsafed unto her, and then bidding a word of peace to her host and her companion, withdrew to her hard-earned couch, and soon was buried in a sleep as sweet and innocent as herself.

But repose fell not upon the eyelids of Nicæus, in spite of all his labors. The heart of the Athenian prince was distracted by the two most powerful of passions, — love and jealousy; and when the eremite, pointing out to his guest his allotted resting-place, himself retired to his regular and simple slumbers, Nicæus quitted the cavern, and, standing upon the bank of the river, gazed in abstraction upon the rushing waters foaming in the moonlight. The Prince of Athens, with many admirable

qualities, was one of those men who are influenced only by their passions, and who, in the affairs of life, are invariably guided by their imagination instead of their reason. At present all thought and feeling, all considerations and all circumstances, merged in the overpowering love he entertained for Iduna, his determination to obtain her at all cost and peril, and his resolution that she should never again meet Iskander except as the wife of Nicæus. Compared with this paramount object, the future seemed to vanish. The emancipation of his country, the welfare of his friend, even the maintenance of his holy creed, all those great and noble objects for which, under other circumstances, he would have been prepared to sacrifice his fortune and his life, no longer interested or influenced him; and while the legions of the crescent were on the point of pouring into Greece to crush that patriotic and Christian cause over which Iskander and himself had so often mused, whose interests the disinterested absence of Iskander, occasioned solely by his devotion to Nicæus, had certainly endangered, and, perhaps, could the events of the last few hours be known, even sacrificed, the Prince of Athens resolved, unless Iduna would consent to become his, at once to carry off the daughter of Hunniades to some distant country. Nor, indeed, even with his easily excited vanity, was Nicæus sanguine of obtaining his purpose by less violent means. He was already a rejected suitor, and under circumstances which scarcely had left hope. Nothing but the sole credit of her chivalric rescue could perhaps have obtained for him the interest in the heart of Iduna which he coveted. For while this exploit prof-

ferred an irresistible claim to her deepest gratitude, it indicated also, on the part of her deliverer, the presence and possession of all those great qualities, the absence of which in the character and conduct of her suitor Iduna had not, at a former period, endeavored to conceal to be the principal cause of his rejection. And now, by the unhappy course of circumstances, the very deed on which he counted, with sanguine hope, as the sure means of his success, seemed as it were to have placed him in a still inferior situation than before. The constant society of his mistress had fanned the flame which, apart from her and hopeless, he had endeavored to repress, to all its former force and ardor; while, on the other hand, he could not conceal from himself that Iduna must feel that he had played in these great proceedings but a secondary part; that all the genius and all the generosity of the exploit rested with Iskander, who, after having obtained her freedom by so much energy, peril, sagacity, and skill, had secured it by a devoted courage which might shame all the knights of Christendom, perhaps, too, had secured it by his own life.

What if Iskander were no more? It was a great contingency. The eternal servitude of Greece, and the shameful triumph of the crescent, were involved, perhaps, in that single event. And could the possession of Iduna compensate for such disgrace and infamy? Let us not record the wild response of passion.

It was midnight ere the restless Nicæus, more exhausted by his agitating revery than by his previous exertions, returned into the cavern, and found refuge in sleep from all his disquietudes.



## XIV.

THE eremite rose with the sun, and, while he was yet at matins, was joined by Iduna, refreshed and cheerful after her unusual slumbers. After performing their devotions, her venerable host proposed that they should go forth and enjoy the morning air. So, descending the precipitous bank of the river, he led the way to a small glen, the bed of a tributary rivulet, now nearly exhausted. Beautiful clumps of birch-trees and tall, thin poplars rose on each side among the rocks, which were covered with bright mosses, and parasitical plants of gay and various colors. One side of the glen was touched with the golden and grateful beams of the rising sun, and the other was in deep shadow.

"Here you can enjoy nature and freedom in security," said the eremite; "for your enemies, if they have not already given up their pursuit, will scarcely search this sweet solitude."

"It is indeed sweet, holy father," said Iduna; "but the captive, who has escaped from captivity, can alone feel all its sweetness."

"It is true," said the eremite; "I also have been a captive."

"Indeed! holy father. To the infidels?"

"To the infidels, gentle pilgrim."

"Have you been at Adrianople?"

"My oppressors were not the Paynim," replied the eremite, "but they were enemies far more dire, — my own evil passions. Time was when my eye sparkled like thine, gentle pilgrim, and my heart was not as pure."

“God is merciful,” said Iduna, “and without his aid the strongest are but shadows.”

“Ever think so,” replied the eremite, “and you will deserve rather his love than his mercy. Thirty long years have I spent in this solitude, meditating upon the past, and it is a theme yet fertile in instruction. My hours are never heavy, and memory is to me what action is to other men.”

“You have seen much, holy father?”

“And felt more. Yet you will perhaps think the result of all my experience very slight, for I can only say unto thee, Trust not in thyself.”

“It is a great truth,” remarked Iduna, “and leads to a higher one.”

“Even so,” replied the eremite. “We are full of wisdom in old age, as in winter this river is full of water; but the fire of youth, like the summer sun, dries up the stream.”

Iduna did not reply. The eremite attracted her attention to a patch of cresses on the opposite bank of the stream. “Every morn I rise only to discover fresh instances of omnipotent benevolence,” he exclaimed. “Yesterday ye tasted my honey and my fish. To-day I can offer ye a fresh dainty. We will break our fast in this pleasant glen. Rest thou here, gentle youth, and I will summon thy brother to our meal. I fear me much he does not bear so contented a spirit as thyself.”

“He is older, and has seen more,” replied Iduna.

The eremite shook his head, and, leaning on his staff, returned to the cavern. Iduna remained seated on a

mossy rock listening to the awaking birds and musing over the fate of Iskander. While she was indulging in this revery her name was called. She looked up with a blush, and beheld Nicæus.

"How fares my gentle comrade?" inquired the Prince of Athens.

"As well as I hope you are, dear Nicæus. We have been indeed fortunate in finding so kind a host."

"I think I may now congratulate you on your safety," said the prince. "This unfrequented pass will lead us in two days to Epirus, nor do I indeed now fear pursuit."

"Acts and not words must express in future how much we owe to you," said Iduna. "My joy would be complete if my father only knew of our safety, and if our late companion were here to share it."

"Fear not for my friend," replied Nicæus. "I have faith in the fortune of Iskander."

"If any one could succeed under such circumstances, he doubtless is the man," rejoined Iduna; "but it was indeed an awful crisis in his fate."

"Trust me, dear lady, it is wise to banish gloomy thoughts."

"We can give him only our thoughts," said Iduna; "and when we remember how much is dependent on his life, can they be cheerful?"

"Mine must be so when I am in the presence of Iduna," replied Nicæus.

The daughter of Hunniades gathered moss from the rock and threw it into the stream.

"Dear lady," said the Prince of Athens, seating him-

self by her side and stealing her gentle hand. "Pardon me if an irrepressible feeling at this moment impels me to recur to a subject which I would fain hope were not so unpleasing to you as once so unhappily you deemed it. O Iduna, Iduna, best and dearest, we are once more together; once more I gaze upon that unrivalled form, and listen to the music of that matchless voice! I sought you, I perhaps violated my pledge, but I sought you in captivity and sorrow. Pardon me, pity me, Iduna! O Iduna, if possible, love me!"

She turned away her head, she turned away her streaming eyes. "It is impossible not to love my deliverer," she replied in a low and tremulous voice, "even could he not prefer the many other claims to affection which are possessed by the Prince of Athens. I was not prepared for this renewal of a most painful subject, perhaps under no circumstances; but least of all under those in which we now find ourselves."

"Alas!" exclaimed the prince, "I can no longer control my passion. My life, not my happiness merely, depends upon Iduna becoming mine. Bear with me, my beloved, bear with me! Were you Nicæus, you too would need forgiveness."

"I beseech you, cease!" exclaimed Iduna, in a firmer voice; and, withdrawing her hand, she suddenly rose. "This is neither the time nor the place for such conversation. I have not forgotten that, but a few days back, I was a hopeless captive, and that my life and fame are even now in danger. Great mercies have been vouchsafed to me; but still I perhaps need the hourly interposition of heavenly aid. Other than such worldly thoughts should

fill my mind, and do. Dear Nicæus," she continued, in a more soothing tone, "you have nobly commenced a most heroic enterprise; fulfil it in like spirit."

He would have replied; but at this moment the staff of the eremite sounded among the rocks. Baffled, and dark with rage and passion, the Prince of Athens quitted Iduna and strolled towards the upper part of the glen to conceal his anger and disappointment.

"Eat, gentle youth," said the eremite. "Will not thy brother join us? What may be his name?"

"Nicæus, holy father."

"And thine?"

Iduna blushed and hesitated. At length, in her confusion, she replied, "Iskander."

"Nicæus!" called out the eremite, "Iskander and myself await thee!"

Iduna trembled. She was agreeably surprised when the prince returned with a smiling countenance, and joined in the meal with many cheerful words.

"Now I propose," said the eremite, "that yourself and your brother Iskander should tarry with me some days, if indeed my simple fare have any temptation."

"I thank thee, holy father," replied Nicæus, "but our affairs are urgent; nor indeed could I have tarried here at all, had it not been for my young Iskander here, who, as you may easily believe, is little accustomed to his late exertions. But, indeed, towards sunset we must proceed."

"Bearing with us," added Iduna, "a most grateful recollection of our host."

“God be with ye, wherever ye may proceed,” replied the eremite.

“My trust is indeed in him,” rejoined Iduna.

## XV.

AND so, two hours before sunset, mounting their refreshed horses, Nicæus and Iduna quitted, with many kind words, the cavern of the eremite, and took their way along the winding of the river. Throughout the moonlit night they travelled, ascending the last and highest chain of mountains, and reaching the summit by dawn. The cheerful light of morning revealed to them the happy plains of a Christian country. With joyful spirits they descended into fertile land and stopped at a beautiful Greek village embowered in orchards and groves of olive-trees.

The Prince of Athens instantly inquired for the primate, or chief personage of the village, and was conducted to his house; but its master, he was informed, was without, supervising the commencement of the vintage. Leaving Iduna with the family of the primate, Nicæus went in search of him. The vineyard was full of groups busied in the most elegant and joyous of human occupations, gathering, with infinite bursts of merriment, the harvest of the vine. Some, mounted on ladders fixed against the festooning branches, plucked the rich bunches and threw them below, where girls, singing in chorus, caught them in panniers or their extended drapery. In the centre of the vineyard a middle-aged man watched with a calm but vigilant eye the whole proceed-

ings, and occasionally stimulated the indolent or prompted the inexperienced.

“Christo!” said the Prince of Athens, when he had approached him. The primate turned round, but evidently did not immediately recognize the person who addressed him.

“I see,” continued the prince, “that my meditated caution was unnecessary. My strange garb is a sufficient disguise.”

“The Prince Nicæus!” exclaimed the primate. “He is, indeed, disguised, but will, I am sure, pardon his faithful servant.”

“Not a word, Christo!” replied the prince. “To be brief. I have crossed the mountains from Roumelia, and have only within this hour recognized the spot whither I have chanced to arrive. I have a companion with me. I would not be known. You comprehend? Affairs of state. I take it for granted that there are none here who will recognize me after three years’ absence, in this dress.”

“You may feel secure, my lord,” replied Christo. “If you puzzle me, who have known you since you were no bigger than this bunch of grapes, you will quite confound the rest.”

“’T is well. I shall stay here a day or two, in order to give them an opportunity to prepare for my reception. In the mean time, it is necessary to send on a courier at once. You must manage all this for me, Christo. How are your daughters?”

“So, so, please your highness,” replied Christo. “A man with seven daughters has got trouble for every day in the week.”

“But not when they are as pretty as yours are?”

“Poh! poh! Handsome is that handsome does; and as for Alexina, she wants to be married.”

“Very natural. Let her marry, by all means.”

“But Helena wants to do the same.”

“More natural still; for, if possible, she is prettier. For my part, I could marry them both.”

“Ay, ay! that is all very well; but handsome is that handsome does. I have no objection to Alexina marrying, and even Helena; but then there is Lais —”

“Hah! hah! hah!” exclaimed the prince. “I see, my dear Christo, that my foster-sisters give you a proper portion of trouble. However, I must be off to my travelling companion. Come in as soon as you can, my dear fellow, and we will settle everything. A good vintage to you, and only as much mischief as is necessary.” So saying, the prince tripped away.

“Well! who would have thought of seeing him here!” exclaimed the worthy primate. “The same gay dog as ever! What can he have been doing in Roumelia? Affairs of state, indeed! I’ll wager my new epiphany scarf, that, whatever the affairs are, there is a pretty girl in the case.”

## XVI.

THE fair Iduna, after all her perils and sufferings, was at length sheltered in safety under a kind and domestic roof. Alexina, and Helena, and Lais, and all the other sisters emulated each other in the attentions which they lavished upon the two brothers, but especially the youngest. Their kindness, indeed, was only equalled by their



ceaseless curiosity; and had they ever waited for the answers of Iduna to their questions, the daughter of Hunniades might, perhaps, have been somewhat puzzled to reconcile her responses with probability. Helena answered the questions of Alexina; Lais anticipated even Helena. All that Iduna had to do was to smile and be silent, and it was universally agreed that Iskander was singularly shy as well as excessively handsome. In the mean time, when Nicæus met Iduna in the evening of the second day of their visit, he informed her that he had been so fortunate as to resume an acquaintance with an old companion in arms in the person of a neighboring noble, who had invited them to rest at his castle at the end of their next day's journey. He told her likewise that he had despatched a courier to Croia to inquire after Iskander, who he expected in the course of a very few days would bring them intelligence to guide their future movements, and decide whether they should at once proceed to the capital of Epirus or advance into Bulgaria, in case Hunniades was still in the field. On the morrow, therefore, they proceeded on their journey. Nicæus had procured a litter for Iduna, for which her delicate health was an excuse to Alexina and her sisters, and they were attended by a small body of well-armed cavalry; for, according to the accounts which Nicæus had received, the country was still disturbed. They departed at break of day, Nicæus riding by the side of the litter, and occasionally making the most anxious inquiries after the well-being of his fair charge. An hour after noon they rested at a well surrounded by olive-trees, until the extreme heat was somewhat allayed; and then, remounting, pro-

ceeded in the direction of an undulating ridge of green hills that partially intersected the wide plain. Towards sunset the Prince of Athens withdrew the curtains of the litter and called the attention of Iduna to a very fair castle, rising on a fertile eminence and sparkling in the quivering beams of dying light.

"I fear," said Nicæus, "that my friend Justinian will scarcely have returned; but we are old comrades, and he desired me to act as his seneschal. For your sake I am sorry, Iduna, for I feel convinced that he would please you."

"It is, indeed, a fair castle," replied Iduna, "and none but a true knight deserves such a noble residence."

While she spoke the commander of the escort sounded his bugle, and they commenced the ascent of the steep, a winding road cut through a thick wood of evergreen shrubs. The gradual and easy ascent soon brought them to a portal flanked with towers, which admitted them into the outworks of the fortification. Here they found several soldiers on guard, and, the commander again sounding his bugle, the gates of the castle opened, and the seneschal, attended by a suite of many domestics, advanced and welcomed Nicæus and Iduna. The Prince of Athens, dismounting, assisted his fair companion from the litter, and, leading her by the hand, and preceded by the seneschal, entered the castle.

They passed through a magnificent hall, hung with choice armor, and, ascending a staircase of Pentelic marble, were ushered into a suite of lofty chambers, lined with Oriental tapestry, and furnished with many costly couches and cabinets. While they admired a

spectacle so different from anything they had recently beheld or experienced, the seneschal, followed by a number of slaves in splendid attire, advanced and offered them rare and choice refreshments, coffee and confectionery, sherbets and spiced wines. When they had partaken of this elegant cheer, Nicæus intimated to the seneschal that the Lady Iduna might probably wish to retire, and instantly a discreet matron, followed by six most beautiful girls, each bearing a fragrant torch of cinnamon and roses, advanced and offered to conduct the Lady Iduna to her apartments.

The matron and her company of maidens conducted the daughter of Hunniades down a long gallery, which led to a suite of the prettiest chambers in the world. The first was an antechamber, painted like a bower, but filled with the music of living birds; the second, which was much larger, was entirely covered with Venetian mirrors; and resting on a bright Persian carpet were many couches of crimson velvet, covered with a variety of sumptuous dresses; the third room was a bath, made in the semblance of a gigantic shell. Its roof was of transparent alabaster, glowing with shadowy light.

## XVII.

A FLOURISH of trumpets announced the return of the Lady Iduna; and the Prince of Athens, magnificently attired, came forward with a smile and led her, with a compliment on her resuming the dress of her sex, if not of her country, to the banquet. Iduna was not uninfluenced by that excitement which is insensibly produced

by a sudden change of scene and circumstances, and especially by an unexpected transition from hardship, peril, and suffering, to luxury, security, and enjoyment. Their spirits were elevated and gay: she smiled upon Nicæus with a cheerful sympathy. They feasted, they listened to sweet music, they talked over their late adventures, and, animated by their own enjoyment, they became more sanguine as to the fate of Iskander.

“In two or three days we shall know more,” said Nicæus. “In the mean time, rest is absolutely necessary to you. It is only now that you will begin to be sensible of the exertion you have made. If Iskander be at Croia, he has already informed your father of your escape; if he have not arrived, I have arranged that a courier shall be despatched to Hunniades from that city. Do not be anxious. Try to be happy. I am myself sanguine that you will find all well. Come, pledge me your father’s health, fair lady, in this goblet of Tenedos!”

“How know I that at this moment he may not be at the point of death?” replied Iduna. “When I am absent from those I love, I dream only of their unhappiness.”

“At this moment also,” rejoined Nicæus, “he dreams perhaps of your imprisonment among barbarians. Yet how mistaken! Let that consideration support you. Come! here is to the eremite.”

“As willing, if not as sumptuous a host as our present one,” said Iduna; “and when, by the by, do you think that your friend, the Lord Justinian, will arrive?”

"O, never mind him!" said Nicæus. "He would have arrived to-morrow, but the great news which I gave him has probably changed his plans. I told him of the approaching invasion, and he has perhaps found it necessary to visit the neighboring chieftains, or even to go on to Croia."

"Well-a-day!" exclaimed Iduna, "I would we were in my father's camp!"

"We shall soon be there, dear lady," replied the prince. "Come, worthy seneschal," he added, turning to that functionary, "drink to this noble lady's happy meeting with her friends."

## XVIII.

THREE or four days passed away at the castle of Justinian, in which Nicæus used his utmost exertions to divert the anxiety of Iduna. One day was spent in examining the castle, on another he amused her with a hawking-party, on a third he carried her to the neighboring ruins of a temple, and read his favorite Æschylus to her amid its lone and elegant columns. It was impossible for any one to be more amiable and entertaining, and Iduna could not resist recognizing his many virtues and accomplishments. The courier had not yet returned from Croia, which Nicæus accounted for by many satisfactory reasons. The suspense, however, at length became so painful to Iduna, that she proposed to the Prince of Athens that they should, without further delay, proceed to that city. As usual, Nicæus was not wanting in many plausible arguments in favor of their remaining at the castle, but Iduna was resolute.

"Indeed, dear Nicæus," she said, "my anxiety to see my father, or hear from him, is so great, that there is scarcely any danger which I would not encounter to gratify my wish. I feel that I have already taxed your endurance too much. But we are no longer in a hostile land, and guards and guides are to be engaged. Let me then depart alone!"

"Iduna!" exclaimed Nicæus, reproachfully. "Alas! Iduna, you are cruel, but I did not expect this!"

"Dear Nicæus!" she answered, "you always misinterpret me! It would infinitely delight me to be restored to Hunniades by yourself, but these are no common times, and you are no common person. You forget that there is one that has greater claims upon you even than a forlorn maiden, — your country. And whether Iskander be at Croia or not, Greece requires the presence and exertions of the Prince of Athens."

"I have no country," replied Nicæus, mournfully, "and no object for which to exert myself."

"Nicæus! is this the poetic patriot who was yesterday envying Themistocles?"

"Alas! Iduna, yesterday you were my muse. I do not wonder you are wearied of this castle," continued the prince, in a melancholy tone. "This spot contains nothing to interest you; but for me, it holds all that is dear, and — O gentle maiden, one smile from you, one smile of inspiration, and I would not envy Themistocles, and might perhaps rival him!"

They were walking together in the hall of the castle; Iduna stepped aside and affected to examine a curious

buckler. Nicæus followed her, and, placing his arm gently in hers, led her away.

"Dearest Iduna," he said, "pardon me, but men struggle for their fate. Mine is in your power. It is a contest between misery and happiness, glory and perhaps infamy. Do not then wonder that I will not yield my chance of the brighter fortune without an effort. Once more I appeal to your pity, if not to your love. Were Iduna mine, were she to hold out but the possibility of her being mine, there is no career, — solemnly I avow what solemnly I feel, — there is no career of which I could not be capable, and no conditions to which I would not willingly subscribe. But this certainty, or this contingency, I must have: I cannot exist without the alternative. And now, upon my knees, I implore her to grant it to me!"

"Nicæus," said Iduna, "this continued recurrence to a forbidden subject is most ungenerous."

"Alas! Iduna, my life depends upon a word, which you will not speak, and you talk of generosity! No! Iduna, it is not I that am ungenerous."

"Let me say then unreasonable, Prince Nicæus."

"Say what you like, Iduna, provided you say that you are mine."

"Pardon me, sir; I am free."

"Free! You have ever underrated me, Iduna. To whom do you owe this boasted freedom?"

"This is not the first time," remarked Iduna, "that you have reminded me of an obligation, the memory of which is indelibly impressed upon my heart, and for which even the present conversation cannot make me

feel less grateful. I can never forget that I owe all that is dear to yourself and your companion."

"My companion!" replied the Prince of Athens, pale and passionate, — "my companion! Am I ever to be reminded of my companion?"

"Nicæus!" said Iduna, "if you forget what is due to me, at least endeavor to remember what is due to yourself!"

"Beautiful being!" said the prince, advancing and passionately seizing her hand; "pardon me! — pardon me! I am not master of my reason; I am nothing, I am nothing, while Iduna hesitates."

"She does not hesitate, Nicæus. I desire — I require that this conversation shall cease — shall never, never be renewed."

"And I tell thee, haughty woman," said the Prince of Athens, grinding his teeth, and speaking with violent action, "that I will no longer be despised with impunity. Iduna is mine, or is no one's else."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the daughter of Hunniades. "Is it indeed come to this? But why am I surprised? I have long known Nicæus. I quit this castle instantly."

"You are a prisoner," replied the prince, very calmly, and leaning with folded arms against the wall.

"A prisoner!" exclaimed Iduna, a little alarmed, — "a prisoner! I defy you, sir. You are only a guest like myself. I will appeal to the seneschal in the absence of his lord. He will never permit the honor of his master's flag to be violated by the irrational caprice of a passionate boy."

"What lord?" inquired Nicæus.



"Your friend, the Lord Justinian," answered Iduna. "He could little anticipate such an abuse of his hospitality."

"My friend, the Lord Justinian!" replied Nicæus, with a malignant smile. "I am surprised that a personage of the Lady Iduna's deep discrimination should so easily be deceived by 'a passionate boy'! Is it possible that you could have supposed for a moment that there was any other lord of this castle, save your devoted slave?"

"What!" exclaimed Iduna, really frightened.

"I have indeed the honor of finding the Lady Iduna my guest," continued Nicæus, in a tone of bitter raillery. "This castle of Kallista, the fairest in all Epirus, I inherit from my mother. Of late I have seldom visited it; but indeed it will become a favorite residence of mine, if it be, as I anticipate, the scene of my nuptial ceremony."

Iduna looked around her with astonishment, then threw herself upon a couch, and burst into tears. The Prince of Athens walked up and down the hall with an air of determined coolness.

"Perfidious!" exclaimed Iduna between her sobs.

"Lady Iduna," said the prince, and he seated himself by her side, "I will not attempt to palliate a deception which your charms could alone inspire and can alone justify. Hear me, Lady Iduna, hear me with calmness. I love you; I love with a passion which has been as constant as it is strong. My birth, my rank, my fortunes, do not disqualify me for a union with the daughter of the great Hunniades. If my personal claims may sink in

comparison with her surpassing excellence, I am yet to learn that any other prince in Christendom can urge a more effective plea. I am young ; the ladies of the court have called me handsome ; by your great father's side I have broken some lances in your honor ; and even Iduna once confessed she thought me clever. Come, come, be merciful ! Let my beautiful Athens receive a fitting mistress. A holy father is in readiness, dear maiden. Come now, one smile ! In a few days we shall reach your father's camp, and then we will kneel, as I do now, and beg a blessing on our happy union." As he spoke, he dropped upon his knee, and, stealing her hand, looked into her face. It was sorrowful and gloomy.

"It is vain, Nicæus," said Iduna, "to appeal to your generosity ; it is useless to talk of the past ; it is idle to reproach you for the present. I am a woman, alone and persecuted, where I could least anticipate persecution. Nicæus, I never can be yours ; and now I deliver myself to the mercy of Almighty God."

"'Tis well," replied Nicæus. "From the tower of the castle you may behold the waves of the Ionian Sea. You will remain here a close prisoner, until one of my galleys arrives from Piræus, to bear us to Italy. Mine you must be, Iduna. It remains for you to decide under what circumstances. Continue in your obstinacy, and you may bid farewell forever to your country and to your father. Be reasonable, and a destiny awaits you which offers everything that has hitherto been considered the source or cause of happiness." Thus speaking, the prince retired, leaving Lady Iduna to her own unhappy thoughts.

## XIX.

THE Lady Iduna was at first inclined to view the conduct of the Prince of Athens as one of those passionate and passing ebullitions in which her long acquaintance with him had taught her he was accustomed to indulge. But when, on retiring soon after to her apartments, she was informed by her attendant matron that she must in future consider herself a prisoner, and not venture again to quit them without permission, she began to tremble at the possible violence of an ill-regulated mind. She endeavored to interest her attendant in her behalf; but the matron was too well schooled to evince any feeling or express any opinion on the subject; and indeed, at length, fairly informed Iduna that she was commanded to confine her conversation to the duties of her office.

The Lady Iduna was very unhappy. She thought of her father, she thought of Iskander. The past seemed a dream; she was often tempted to believe that she was still, and had ever been, a prisoner in the serail of Adrianople; and that all the late wonderful incidents of her life were but the shifting scenes of some wild slumber. And then some slight incident, the sound of a bell, or the sight of some holy emblem, assured her she was in a Christian land, and convinced her of the strange truth that she was indeed in captivity, and a prisoner, above all others, to the fond companion of her youth. Her indignation at the conduct of Nicæus roused her courage; she resolved to make an effort to escape. Her rooms were only lighted from above; she determined to steal forth at night into the gallery; the door was secured.

She hastened back to her chamber in fear and sorrow, and wept.

Twice in the course of the day the stern and silent matron visited Iduna with her food, and, as she retired, secured the door. This was the only individual that the imprisoned lady ever beheld. And thus heavily rolled on upwards of a week. On the eve of the ninth day, Iduna was surprised by the matron presenting her a letter as she quitted the chamber for the night. Iduna seized it with a feeling of curiosity not unmingled with pleasure. It was the only incident that had occurred during her captivity. She recognized the handwriting of Nicæus, and threw it down with vexation at her silliness in supposing, for a moment, that the matron could have been the emissary of any other person.

Yet the letter must be read, and at length she opened it. It informed her that a ship had arrived from Athens at the coast, and that to-morrow she must depart for Italy. It told her, also, that the Turks, under Mahomed, had invaded Albania; and that the Hungarians, under the command of her father, had come to support the cross. It said nothing of Iskander. But it reminded her that little more than the same time that would carry her to the coast to embark for a foreign land would, were she wise, alike enable Nicæus to place her in her father's arms, and allow him to join in the great struggle for his country and his creed. The letter was written with firmness, but tenderly. It left, however, on the mind of Iduna, an impression of the desperate resolution of the writer.

Now it so happened that as this unhappy lady jumped

from her couch, and paced the room in the perturbation of her mind, the wind of her drapery extinguished her lamp. As her attendant or jailer had paid her last visit for the day, there seemed little chance of its being again illumined. The miserable are always more unhappy in the dark. Light is the greatest of comforters. And this little misfortune seemed to the forlorn Iduna almost overwhelming. And as she attempted to look around, and wrung her hands in very woe, her attention was attracted by a brilliant streak of light upon the wall, which greatly surprised her. She groped her way in its direction, and slowly stretching forth her hand, observed that it made its way through a chink in the frame of one of the great mirrors which were inlaid in the wall. As she pressed the frame, she felt to her surprise that it sprang forward. Had she not been very cautious, the advancing mirror would have struck her with great force, but she had presence of mind to withdraw her hand very gradually, repressing the swiftness of the spring. The aperture occasioned by the opening of the mirror consisted of a recess, formed by a closed-up window. An old wooden shutter, or blind, in so ruinous a state that the light freely made its way, was the only barrier against the elements. Iduna, seizing the handle which remained, at once drew it open with little difficulty.

The captive gazed with gladdened feelings upon the free and beautiful scene. Beneath her rose the rich and aromatic shrubs tinged with the soft and silver light of eve; before her extended the wide and fertile champaign, skirted by the dark and undulating mountains; in the clear sky, glittering and sharp, sparkled the first cres-

cent of the new moon, — an auspicious omen to the Moslem invaders.

Iduna gazed with joy upon the landscape. and then hastily descending from the recess, she placed her hands to her eyes, so long unaccustomed to the light. Perhaps too, she indulged in momentary meditation. For suddenly seizing a number of shawls which were lying on the couches, she knotted them together, and then, striving with all her force, she placed the heaviest couch on one end of the costly cord, and then, throwing the other out of the window, and intrusting herself to the merciful care of the Holy Virgin, the brave daughter of Hunniades successfully dropped down into the garden below.

She stopped to breathe, and to revel in her emancipated existence. It was a bold enterprise gallantly achieved. But the danger had now only commenced. She found that she had lighted at the back of the castle. She stole along upon tiptoe, timid as a fawn. She remembered a small wicket-gate that led into the open country. She arrived at it. It was of course guarded. The single sentinel was kneeling before an image of St. George; beside him was an empty drinking-cup and an exhausted wine-skin.

“Holy saint!” exclaimed the pious sentinel, “preserve us from all Turkish infidels!” Iduna stole behind him. “Shall men who drink no wine conquer true Christians?” continued the sentinel. Iduna placed her hand upon the lock. “We thank thee for our good vintage,” said the sentinel. Iduna opened the gate with the noiseless touch which a feminine finger alone can command.

“And for the rise of Lord Iskander!” added the sentinel. Iduna escaped!

Now she indeed was free. Swiftly she ran over the wide plain. She hoped to reach some town or village before her escape could be discovered, and she hurried on for three hours without resting. She came to a beautiful grove of olive-trees that spread in extensive ramifications about the plain. And through this beautiful grove of olive-trees her path seemed to lead. So she entered and advanced. And when she had journeyed for about a mile, she came to an open and very verdant piece of ground, which was, as it were, the heart of the grove. In its centre rose a fair and antique structure of white marble, shrouding from the noonday sun the perennial flow of a very famous fountain. It was near midnight. Iduna was wearied, and she sat down upon the steps of the fountain for rest. And while she was musing over all the strange adventures of her life, she heard a rustling in the wood, and, being alarmed, she rose and hid herself behind a tree.

And while she stood there, with palpitating heart, the figure of a man advanced to the fountain from an opposite direction of the grove. He went up the steps, and looked down upon the spring as if he were about to drink, but instead of doing that, he drew his cimeter and plunged it into the water, and called out with a loud voice the name of “Iskander!” three times. Whereupon Iduna, actuated by an irresistible impulse, came forward from her hiding-place, but instantly gave a loud shriek when she beheld — the Prince Mahomed!

“O night of glory!” exclaimed the prince, advan-

cing, "do I indeed behold the fair Iduna! This is truly magic!"

"Away! away!" exclaimed the distracted Iduna, as she endeavored to fly from him.

"He has kept his word, that cunning leech, better than I expected," said Mahomed, seizing her.

"As well as you deserve, ravisher!" exclaimed a majestic voice. A tall figure rushed forward from the wood and dashed back the Turk.

"I am here to complete my contract, Prince Mahomed," said the stranger, drawing his sword.

"Iskander!" exclaimed the prince.

"We have met before, prince. Let us so act now that we may meet for the last time."

"Infamous, infernal traitor," exclaimed Mahomed, "dost thou, indeed, imagine that I will sully my imperial blade with the blood of my runaway slave! No! I came here to secure thy punishment, but I cannot condescend to become thy punisher. Advance, guards, and seize him! Seize them both!"

Iduna flew to Iskander, who caught her in one arm, while he waved his cimeter with the other. The guards of Mahomed poured forth from the side of the grove whence the prince had issued.

"And dost thou, indeed, think, Mahomed," said Iskander, "that I have been educated in the seraglio to be duped by Moslemin craft? I offer thee single combat if thou desirest it, but combat as we may, the struggle shall be equal." He whistled, and instantly a body of Hungarians, headed by Hunniades himself, advanced from the side of the grove whence Iskander had issued.



"Come on, then," said Mahomed ; "each to his man." Their swords clashed, but the principal attendants of the son of Amurath, deeming the affair, under the present circumstances, assumed the character of a mere rash adventure, bore away the Turkish prince.

"To-morrow, then, this fray shall be decided, on the plains of Kallista," said Mahomed.

"Epirus is prepared," replied Iskander.

The Turks withdrew. Iskander bore the senseless form of Iduna to her father. Hunniades embraced his long-lost child. They sprinkled her face with water from the fountain. She revived.

"Where is Nicæus ?" inquired Iskander ; "and how came you again, dear lady, in the power of Mahomed ?"

"Alas ! noble sir, my twice deliverer," answered Iduna, "I have, indeed, again been doomed to captivity, but my persecutor, I blush to say, was this time a Christian prince."

"Holy Virgin !" exclaimed Iskander. "Who can this villain be ?"

"The villain, Lord Iskander, is your friend ; and your pupil, dear father."

"Nicæus of Athens !" exclaimed Hunniades.

Iskander was silent and melancholy.

Thereupon the Lady Iduna recounted to her father and Iskander, sitting between them on the margin of the fount, all that had occurred to her since herself and Nicæus parted with Iskander ; nor did she omit to relate to Hunniades all the devotion of Iskander, respecting which, like a truly brave man, he had himself been silent. The great Hunniades scarcely knew which rather

to do, to lavish his affection on his beloved child, or his gratitude upon Iskander. Thus they went on conversing for some time, Iskander placing his own cloak around Iduna, and almost unconsciously winding his arm around her unresisting form.

Just as they were preparing to return to the Christian camp, a great noise was heard in the grove, and presently, in the direction whence Iduna had arrived, came a band of men, bearing torches and examining the grove in all directions in great agitation. Iskander and Hunniades stood upon their guard, but soon perceived they were Greeks. Their leader, seeing a group near the fountain, advanced to make inquiries respecting the object of his search; but when he indeed recognized the persons who formed the group, the torch fell from his grasp, and he turned away his head and hid his face in his hands.

Iduna clung to her father; Iskander stood with his eyes fixed upon the ground; but Hunniades, stern and terrible, disembarassing himself of the grasp of his daughter, advanced and laid his hand upon the stranger.

"Young man," said the noble father, "were it contrition instead of shame that inspired this attitude, it might be better. I have often warned you of the fatal consequences of a reckless indulgence of the passions. More than once I have predicted to you, that however great might be your confidence in your ingenuity and your resources, the hour would arrive when such a career would place you in a position as despicable as it was shameful. That hour has arrived, and that position is now filled by the Prince of Athens. You stand before

the three individuals in this world whom you have most injured, and whom you were most bound to love and to protect. Here is a friend, who has hazarded his property and his existence for your life and your happiness. And you have made him a mere pander to your lusts, and then deserted him in his greatest necessities. This maiden was the companion of your youth, and entitled to your kindest offices. You have treated her infinitely worse than her Turkish captor. And for myself, sir, your father was my dearest friend. I endeavored to repay his friendship by supplying his place to his orphan child. How I discharged my duty, it becomes not me to say : how you have discharged yours, this lady here, my daughter, your late prisoner, sir, can best prove."

"O, spare me, spare me, sir!" said the Prince of Athens, turning and falling upon his knee. "I am most wretched. Every word cuts to my very core. Just Providence has baffled all my arts, and I am grateful. Whether this lady can, indeed, forgive me, I hardly dare to think, or even hope. And yet forgiveness is a heavenly boon. Perhaps the memory of old days may melt her. As for yourself, sir — but I'll not speak, I cannot. Noble Iskander, if I mistake not, you may whisper words in that fair ear less grating than my own. May you be happy! I will not profane your prospects with my vows. And yet I'll say farewell!"

The Prince of Athens turned away with an air of complete wretchedness, and slowly withdrew. Iskander followed him.

"Nicæus," said Iskander; but the prince entered the grove, and did not turn round.

"Dear Nicæus," said Iskander. The prince hesitated. "Let us not part thus," said Iskander. "Iduna is most unhappy. She bade me tell you she had forgotten all."

"God bless her, and God bless you too!" replied Nicæus. "I pray you let me go."

"Nay! dear Nicæus, are we not friends?"

"The best and truest, Iskander. I will to the camp, and meet you in your tent ere morning break. At present, I would be alone."

"Dear Nicæus, one word. You have said upon one point what I could well wish unsaid, and dared to prophesy what may never happen. I am not made for such supreme felicity. Epirus is my mistress, my Nicæus. As there is a living God, my friend, most solemnly I vow, I have had no thoughts in this affair but for your honor."

"I know it, my dear friend, I know it," replied Nicæus. "I keenly feel your admirable worth. Say no more, say no more! She is a fit wife for a hero, and you *are* one!"

## XX.

AFTER the battle of the bridge, Iskander had hurried to Croia without delay. In his progress, he had made many fruitless inquiries after Iduna and Nicæus, but he consoled himself for the unsatisfactory answers he received by the opinion that they had taken a different course, and the conviction that all must now be safe. The messenger from Croia that informed Hunniades of the escape of his daughter, also solicited his aid in favor

of Epirus against the impending invasion of the Turks ; and stimulated by personal gratitude as well as by public duty, Hunniades answered the solicitation in person, at the head of twenty thousand lances.

Hunniades and Iskander had mutually flattered themselves, when apart, that each would be able to quell the anxiety of the other on the subject of Iduna. The leader of Epirus flattered himself that his late companions had proceeded at once to Transylvania, and the vaivode himself had indulged in the delightful hope that the first person he should embrace at Croia would be his long-lost child. When, therefore, they met, and were mutually incapable of imparting any information on the subject to each other, they were filled with astonishment and disquietude. Events, however, gave them little opportunity to indulge in anxiety or grief. On the day that Hunniades and his lances arrived at Croia, the invading army of the Turks under the Prince Mahomed crossed the mountains, and soon after pitched their camp on the fertile plain of Kallista.

As Iskander, by the aid of Hunniades and the neighboring princes, and the patriotic exertions of his countrymen, was at this moment at the head of a force which the Turkish prince could not have anticipated, he resolved to march at once to meet the Ottomans, and decide the fate of Greece by a pitched battle.

The night before the arrival of Iduna at the famous fountain, the Christian army had taken up its position within a few miles of the Turks. The turbaned warriors wished to delay the engagement until the new moon, the eve of which was at hand. And it happened on that said

ove that Iskander, calling to mind his contract with the Turkish prince made in the gardens of the seraglio at Adrianople, and, believing from the superstitious character of Mabomed that he would not fail to be at the appointed spot, resolved, as we have seen, to repair to the fountain of Kallista.

And now from that fountain the hero retired, bearing with him a prize scarcely less precious than the freedom of the country for which he was to combat on the morrow's morn.

Ere the dawn had broken, the Christian power was in motion. Iskander commanded the centre, Hunniades the right wing. The left was intrusted, at his urgent request, to the Prince of Athens. A mist that hung about the plain allowed Nicæus to charge the right wing of the Turks almost unperceived. He charged with irresistible fury, and soon disordered the ranks of the Moslemin. Mahomed with the reserve hastened to their aid. A mighty multitude of janissaries, shouting the name of Allah and his prophet, penetrated the Christian centre. Hunniades endeavored to attack them on their flank, but was himself charged by the Turkish cavalry. The battle was now general, and raged with terrible fury. Iskander had secreted in his centre a new and powerful battery of cannon, presented to him by the Pope, which had just arrived from Venice. This battery played upon the janissaries with great destruction. He himself mowed them down with his irresistible cimeter.

Infinite was the slaughter! awful the uproar! But of all the Christian knights, this day, no one performed

such mighty feats of arms as the Prince of Athens. With a reckless desperation he dashed about the field, and everything seemed to yield to his inspiring impulse. His example animated his men with such a degree of enthusiasm, that the division to which he was opposed, although encouraged by the presence of Mahomed himself, could no longer withstand the desperate courage of the Christians, and they fled in all directions. Then, rushing to the aid of Iskander, Nicæus, at the head of a body of picked men, dashed upon the rear of the janissaries, and nearly surrounded them. Hunniades instantly made a fresh charge upon the left wing of the Turks. A panic fell upon the Moslemin, who were little prepared for such a demonstration of strength on the part of their adversaries. In a few minutes their order seemed generally broken, and their leaders in vain endeavored to rally them. Waving his bloody cimeter, and bounding on his black charger, Iskander called upon his men to secure the triumph of the cross and the freedom of Epirus. Pursuit was now general.

## XXI.

THE Turks were massacred by thousands. Mahomed, when he found that all was lost, fled to the mountains, with a train of guards and eunuchs, and left the care of his dispersed host to his pashas. The hills were covered with the fugitives and their pursuers. Some also fled to the sea-shore, where the Turkish fleet was at anchor. The plain was strewn with corpses and arms, and tents and standards. The sun was now high in the heavens.

The mist had cleared away; but occasional clouds of smoke still sailed about.

A solitary Christian knight entered a winding pass in the green hills apart from the scene of strife. The slow and trembling step of his wearied steed would have ill qualified him to join in the triumphant pursuit, even had he himself been physically enabled; but the Christian knight was covered with gore, unhappily not alone that of his enemies. He was, indeed, streaming with desperate wounds, and scarcely could his fainting form retain its tottering seat.

The winding pass, which, for some singular reason, he now pursued in solitude, instead of returning to the busy camp for aid and assistance, conducted the knight to a small green valley, covered with sweet herbs, and entirely surrounded by hanging woods. In the centre rose the ruins of a Doric fane: three or four columns gray and majestic. All was still and silent, save that in the clear blue sky an eagle flew, high in the air, but whirling round the temple.

The knight reached the ruins of the Doric fane, and with difficulty dismounting from his charger, fell upon the soft and flowery turf, and for some moments was motionless. His horse stole a few yards away, and though scarcely less injured than its rider, instantly commenced cropping the inviting pasture.

At length the Christian knight slowly raised his head and, leaning on his arm, sighed deeply. His face was very pale; but as he looked up and perceived the eagle in the heaven, a smile played upon his pallid cheek, and his beautiful eye gleamed with a sudden flash of light.



"Glorious bird!" murmured the Christian warrior, "once I deemed that my career might resemble thine! 'Tis over now; and Greece, for which I would have done so much, will soon forget my inmemorial name. I have stolen here to die in silence and in beauty. This blue air, and these green woods, and these lone columns, which oft to me have been a consolation, breathing of the poetic past, and of the days wherein I fain had lived, I have escaped from the fell field of carnage to die among them. Farewell! my country! Farewell to one more beautiful than Greece, — farewell, Iduna!"

These were the last words of Nicæus, Prince of Athens!

## XXII.

WHILE the unhappy lover of the daughter of Hunniades breathed his last words to the solitary elements, his more fortunate friend received, in the centre of his scene of triumph, the glorious congratulations of his emancipated country. The discomfiture of the Turks was complete, and this overthrow, coupled with their recent defeat in Bulgaria, secured Christendom from their assaults during the remainder of the reign of Amurath the Second. Surrounded by his princely allies, and the chieftains of Epirus, the victorious standards of Christendom, and the triumphant trophies of the Moslemin, Iskander received from the great Hunniades the hand of his beautiful daughter. "Thanks to these brave warriors," said the hero, "I can now offer to your daughter a safe, an honorable, and a Christian home."

"It is to thee, great sir, that Epirus owes its security,"

said an ancient chieftain, addressing Iskander, "its national existence, and its holy religion. All that we have to do now is to preserve them ; nor indeed do I see that we can more effectually obtain these great objects than by entreating thee to mount the redeemed throne of thy ancestors. Therefore I say, GOD SAVE ISKANDER, KING OF EPIRUS !"

And all the people shouted and said, " GOD SAVE THE KING ! GOD SAVE ISKANDER, KING OF EPIRUS !"

















